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New York

President: Mr. Jeremić .... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 6.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Dessima Williams, Chair of the delegation of Grenada.

Ms. Williams (Grenada): I am honoured to address the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session on behalf of Mr. Tillman J. Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada, and the people of Grenada.

Grenada commends the work of the United Nations over the past year, with special commendation for the leadership and stewardship of the outgoing President, Qatari diplomat Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. Looking ahead, we place our confidence in you, Sir, and your team, and look forward to your guidance of the work this year under the general theme "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". We extend Grenada's full esteem and support to our able Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, whom we thank for his continued leadership and service to Member States.

Grenada recommits unwaveringly to the principles of the United Nations, as embodied in the Charter. Our commitment in national and international life to the norms of peace, equality and justice, and to human rights and multilateralism, is clear. Over the past year, Grenada ratified and deposited instruments of ratification with the United Nations, including for the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In ratifying the Rome Statute, Grenada became the Member State that brought that Treaty into force. That exemplifies our commitment to the principle of the rule of law, which resonates with every Grenadian as a result of our enthusiasm for justice and for ending impunity. Grenada welcomes the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (resolution 67/1) of 24 September, and expects to make a voluntary pledge.

On the domestic front, in April Parliament passed the End Violence against Women Legislative and Policy Reform Bill. Aware that by itself the passage of a law is insufficient to change society's entrenched cultural attitudes and practices, we are also embarking on public education and on strengthening the capacity of Government departments, among other things. We will continue on that path to secure the rights of people, for we are convinced that law and security are the sine qua non for the facilitation of the peaceful settlement of disputes, which is itself the foundation for an international environment of peace. Indeed, democracy, good governance, social inclusion, conflict resolution, development and sustained overall progress are all helped by the rule of law within our countries and in the international system.

Grenada is a small island developing State. Nature has been especially generous to us, and our people are extraordinarily hard-working and big-spirited. Yet the fruits of nature and of our own efforts have been undermined by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, Hurricane

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Emily in 2005 and the advent in 2008 of the global financial and economic crisis. That notwithstanding, we remain confident that a pathway to success exists for us, based on our own efforts and the support of the international community and this great Organization.

From Grenada's perspective, the highlight of the past year has been the renewed international political commitment to sustainable development; indeed, interest continues to grow and to gain momentum. Sustainable development is one of our declared priorities in Grenada. It is a priority this year since the Secretary-General announced that sustainable development would be the number one item on his agenda during his second term, and you, too, Sir, declared it a priority.

In June, more than 120 heads of State and Government endorsed the paradigm of sustainable development in Rio, and the outcome document, entitled "The future we want", declares: "We resolve to take urgent action to achieve sustainable development" (*resolution 66/288, annex, para. 12*). Leaders agreed to articulate policies and programmes that would promote socially inclusive behaviour to quickly and equitably bring about prosperity and to do so in a manner that would instil hope and create livelihood opportunities for those yet to come.

Because of our tremendous green and blue endowments and the fact that our people live intelligently with them, Grenada has long considered itself an island of sustainability. That describes a holistic policy framework that defines our consumption and production path as spelt out in our five strategic development pillars: energy development; education, health and wellness; information and communications technology; tourism and hospitality; and agribusiness.

Grenada is committed, then, to a path of sustainability. Its determined efforts are led by our energy policy aimed at reducing fossil-fuel usage by 20 per cent by the year 2020 and at being completely carbon-neutral by 2030. The manufacturing sector is rapidly emerging as a producer of indigenous green and organic products, and the hotel sector is going green.

It should be recalled that Grenada is building itself back from the World Bank-determined loss of 204 per cent of its gross domestic product as a result of the hurricane destruction we experienced in 2004 and 2005. We have made great strides with recovery due to the generosity of our neighbours and friends everywhere, for which we remain forever indebted and grateful.

Since 2008, our situation has been compounded by the weight of the global financial and economic downturn, which is dwarfing development efforts due to loss of tourism and port receipts and even of remittances. However, we recognize with deep appreciation that, as our economy has slowed in direct response to the global economic crisis, our neighbours are again coming to our assistance.

Grenada is defined as a middle-income country, and yet its stability and growth are challenged by serious socioeconomic predicaments. We are facing the high cost of fuel and food, costs associated with confronting the illicit trafficking in drugs and small arms and light weapons and related crime, and an increase in unemployment and poverty.

What is consistent in that context is that, like so many of the Caribbean and small island developing countries, Grenada contributes least to the financial and economic crisis, greenhouse-gas emissions and the production of arms and illicit drugs, and yet those scourges have a disproportionate impact on us as compared to the countries that produce them, and of course our ability to respond effectively is far inferior.

So what, then, is the way forward? The way forward lies primarily in improvement of the domestic environment. We continue to achieve this through laws, economic and social policies and our national spirit of perseverance. Among our many initiatives, in January 2013, for example, Grenada will be co-hosting a meeting in the Caribbean with business innovator Sir Richard Branson on ensuring the sustainable management of our marine and coastal resources.

Yet small island developing States need a far more supportive international policy climate and affordable financing for a safe and secure way forward into greater sustainability. That will be the way we hold on to the hard-earned progress made so far with respect to the Millennium Development Goals and how we will be able to expand it. We hope then to be guided by the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development framework to further support our ambitious economic and social transformation agenda.

We continue to believe that peace and security and a reduction in military spending in the international community will be good for a global economic recovery, which in turn will be good for the financing of sustainable development. Unless there is recovery in the large economies to which our own economic life remains tied, we will see no sustained recovery. We therefore call for commitments made to developing countries to be met, and we remain willing partners in South-South cooperation.

The staggering loss of life in Syria must be brought to an end by all those responsible. We call for a politically negotiated and urgent settlement, and we reiterate Grenada's support for the diplomacy work being carried out, inter alia, by the United Nations and the Arab League. We call for policies of inclusion and openness that will accommodate all just aspirations of all members of society in the Middle East and elsewhere.

We reiterate our call for a State for the Palestinian people in a negotiated two-State agreement with Israel through a peace plan. The injustices meted out to the Palestinians, including widespread unemployment, poverty and displacement, must end now. The Palestinian people, led by their Government, the Palestinian Authority, have our strong support for their just aspirations. We are convinced that the two nations can coexist side by side in peace and harmony, like so many other countries.

Grenada takes this opportunity to extend once again its heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the United States of America and to the bereaved families of Ambassador Chris Stevens and his colleagues. We deplore those senseless acts and continue to call for the improvement of the protection of all diplomats serving abroad.

Grenada calls for the cessation of the trafficking of weapons through our Caribbean region and for a firm and comprehensive, yet expeditious, agreement on small arms and light weapons. We also renew our call for the preservation of the Caribbean Sea as a zone of peace and development and for the bringing of an end to the passage of nuclear waste in our waters.

Grenada looks forward to the third Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States in 2014, and we call on the international community to lend its fullest and broadest support to that Conference. We further call on the General Assembly to designate 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States so as to raise awareness of the special situation of small island developing States (SIDS) and to mobilize international support for their sustainable development. Support for SIDS from China in energy efficiency and from Norway in renewable energy is already forthcoming, as is support from Australia.

Without a legally binding climate regime to uphold environmental integrity, Caribbean and other small island States would lose the opportunity for achieving sustainability soon, and some could even disappear. We therefore see the upcoming eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha, Qatar, as an opportunity to move decisively away from that scenario, and we welcome the commitment of the European Union to agreeing to an ambitious second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and to climate financing. We call on other developed countries to do likewise, and on the Secretary-General to encourage States parties to move steadfastly towards finalizing a new binding climate treaty by 2015 and a gap-free period of climate financing starting in January 2013.

If the United Nations is to continue to lead the way in sustainability, peace and security, it must be reformed. The centrepiece of that change must be reform of the Security Council, particularly so as to include a seat for small island developing States. Only a revitalized United Nations can continue to play its historic role in guiding the world, its international financial institutions included, through the geopolitical volatility that is destabilizing the global economic and financial order. Reorganization should not mean, however, the loss of vital country programmes, especially for small countries. The United Nations must continue its irreplaceable work on behalf of women, and Grenada is pleased to serve on the board of UN-Women and to contribute to its endeavours.

Revitalization and reform must also take place in the Caribbean. To that end, we call for the complete removal of the economic, commercial and financial blockade of our sister Caribbean State of Cuba. The United States embargo against Cuba, now almost 50 years old, is in complete contradiction to the spirit of the United Nations Charter. Removal of the embargo has been specifically called for by the leaders of the Caribbean Community as well as by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. Cuba plays a significant humanitarian and development role in the Caribbean and its economic liberation from the embargo will allow it to contribute even more through the dynamic of growing South-South cooperation. Furthermore, Cuba is now playing a facilitating and mediating role in one of the hemisphere's longest political crises and thus making a major contribution to peace and security in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Two years after the unfathomable national disaster in our sister nation of Haiti in 2010, thousands of Haitians are nonetheless still homeless and suffering, as their Government remains without sufficient means to complete national rebuilding. Grenada extends its thanks, first and foremost, to all who have pledged and realized those pledges for the benefit of the Haitian people, for we are but one in the Caribbean. Grenada remains steadfast in its commitment to this imperative, and we renew our appeal to the international community to fulfil all its commitments and, where possible, to increase its contributions to the humanitarian and development needs of Haiti.

Just some 100 days ago in the city of Rio de Janeiro, our Prime Minister, Mr. Tillman Thomas, said:

> "The United Nations is indispensable to the future we need. Grenada considers the United Nations to be best placed for decision-making affecting the international body politic. Indeed, the United Nations has the full legitimacy needed to command authority [and] secure consensus and the necessary trust among all global stakeholders. We recommit to the United Nations and support its reforms."

To conclude, on 6 August, Grenada made history, winning its first Olympic medal, a gold in the men's 400-metre race, thus becoming, according to one calculation, the country with the highest medal per capita ratio in the world. Our people have not yet ceased to celebrate winning gold. Another enduring act celebrated around the world, however, was the graciousness demonstrated by the eventual winner, Kirani James, when he embraced and exchanged bibs with his co-competitor Oscar Pistorius, the outstanding double amputee from South Africa, who despite running an extraordinarily good race came in second behind the soon-to-be Olympic gold medallist. It was a simple Grenadian gesture of admiration, friendship and solidarity, but one that underscores that the human spirit must prevail in relations among individuals and, we dare say, among nations. That one simple act of recognition of the right and, far more important, the nobility of another human being transformed two runners into two brothers, one South African, one Grenadian, one shared humanity.

We name that the Kirani spirit, and we charge this institution with the Kirani spirit — "charge" as in giving it energy; charge as in commanding to do likewise; charge as in holding the collective responsible for our humanity; charge as in charging each nation and each people with their own big-spiritedness.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Stuart Beck, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Beck (Palau): This year's general debate began with a Declaration by world leaders that our collective response to all challenges must be guided by the rule of law (resolution 67/1). Palau is very proud to join in that Declaration, as our national story is inextricably linked with the international rule of law. Not long ago, Palau emerged as the last United Nations Trust Territory, granted independence after more than 100 years and four successive colonial administrations. Our unique road to freedom left us with a lasting legacy: a strong partnership with the United States of America and a constitution that guarantees the Palauan people the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Through independence, we have preserved our heritage, our culture and our environment. That preservation was marked this year by UNESCO's designation of the Rock Islands of Palau as 2012's only natural and cultural world heritage site. And, just last year, the United Nations Development Programme ranked Palau forty-ninth in the world in its Human Development Index, a composite measure of life expectancy, health, educational attainment and living standards. We are very proud of that ranking for this small, new country. It is a tribute to Palau's success.

Having gained so much, Palau has worked to give back to the international community and to make the world a better place. Palau proudly deployed officers as peacekeepers in Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, and continues to do so today in Darfur.

Upon first taking its United Nations seat, Palau focused its energies on the odious practice of deep-sea bottom trawling. And though it has taken some time and considerable buy-in from others, the two consensus resolutions 61/105 and 66/68 show that we can help protect vulnerable deep-sea marine ecosystems and biodiversity on a global scale.

In 2009, from this rostrum, Palau's President, Johnson Toribiong, launched the first volley in an effort to save the world's dwindling shark populations. He declared the world's first shark sanctuary in his general debate address. The ocean's vitality depends on healthy shark populations. So we are grateful that States and territories from across the globe have joined Palau in committing to nurture shark sanctuaries. Today, almost 2 million square miles of ocean — an area approximately nine times the size of Palau's waters — are safe for sharks.

Palau was also the first to sound the alarm on the security impacts of climate change. With our Pacific brothers and sisters, we moved early on to declare climate change a security issue that demands the special attention of every organ of the United Nations system. That was a new and different way of thinking about the problem. Some sceptically questioned whether Blue Helmets would be able to hold back the rising tides.

But 18 months after we began, the Assembly adopted consensus resolution 63/281, inviting the relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts to consider and address climate change, including its possible security implications. That call was heeded by Germany, when it took up the issue last July as President of the Security Council. Thanks to Germany's efforts, as well as those of others on the Council, we now have a historic presidential statement highlighting the potential risks of climate change to international peace and security.

Germany's statement and resolution 63/281 have not stemmed the rising tides, but they have helped to change the way we understand and discuss climate change. No longer can anyone question the impact of climate change on energy security, on food security, on water security or indeed on our territorial integrity. No longer can anyone deny that rising seas and oppressive droughts are displacing people across the globe. As the United States Permanent Representative said at last year's Council meeting, to deny the security implications of climate change would be pathetic.

The world has reached a crossroads on sustainable development. We have recently concluded discussions at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and will soon delineate new sustainable development goals, focusing again on small island developing States. For Palau, that crossroads is an opportunity to better integrate healthy oceans and fisheries into the regulatory development framework.

Sustainable fisheries are Palau's lifeblood. For Palau, it has always been, and continues to be, a blue economy or no economy. That is why we have limited purse seine fishing, agreed with our neighbours to close the doughnut holes between our jurisdictions, and implemented an innovative vessel day scheme strategy through the parties to the Nauru Agreement. That is also why we have conserved 58 per cent of our in-shore marine area through the Protected Areas Network, banned bottom trawling and declared the world's first shark sanctuary.

We were honoured this year that the Protected Areas Network Act and the Shark Haven Act received the 2012 Future Policy Award for outstanding maritime policy and for contributing most effectively to the sustainable management of the world's oceans and coasts for the benefit of current and future generations. We thank the World Future Council, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Okeanos Foundation for the Sea and the Global Environmental Facility for conferring their generous recognition and support through that award.

Palau champions three straightforward principles for global fisheries. First, global fisheries should be fair. If distant-water vessels want to come for fish that traverse Palau's waters, they should respect our laws. They should fish within our limits and recognize our right to realize the benefits of our natural resources. Illegal fishing is tantamount to piracy; it robs us of our livelihoods and undermines our security.

Secondly, global fisheries should be sustainable. We should use every means at our disposal to achieve stock levels that will ensure healthy fisheries for the long term. That includes closing fisheries when necessary.

Thirdly, global fisheries should be accountable. Reports show that 87 per cent of global fish stocks are now fully exploited or overexploited. Those are the worst numbers on record. Regional fisheries management organizations, which stand in the shoes of the General Assembly, should do better and should be more transparent. We are encouraged that negotiations this year enabled the resolution on sustainable fisheries (resolution 66/88) to better reflect those three principles.

Palau is pleased to report on the success of a number of key domestic initiatives, which we have previously raised in the general debate. Palau has taken innovative steps to reduce our emissions by solarizing our airport, our Government buildings and our highways. By 2020, we will generate 20 per cent of our energy from renewable sources. We have also created a successful green mortgage programme to assist the financing of greener homes. That programme, which began with a small amount of financing from Italy, was recently the subject of a workshop among 13 regional financing institutions, with plans for expansion throughout the Pacific.

Palau is also working to connect itself to the world — literally. It is inconceivable to many of us here in New York, but Palau remains without broadband Internet. That means that no Palauan can watch the streaming video of this speech. The Broadband Commission of the International Telecommunication Union tells us that broadband access is a prerequisite to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and that a 10 per cent increase in broadband penetration increases a developing country's gross national product by 1.4 per cent. We are sure that a 100 per cent increase would fundamentally improve Palauan health, business and civic engagement. We continue to seek partners that might help Palau to reach that goal.

Last year Palau underwent its Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review. The most repeated recommendation by Human Rights Council members was that we should establish a national human rights institution. With the help of new partners, we are translating human rights conventions into Palauan, bringing the lessons of international human rights into Palauan schools, harmonizing our national legislation, regulations and practices with the international human rights instruments, and supporting human rights programmes and services in Palau through that formal institution.

All those activities have been complemented by the outstanding work being done to remove explosive remnants of Second World War from Palau. As President Toribiong stated from this rostrum last year, many of those explosives are still live and are being discovered near our schools, roads and utilities. With the help of our partners, much of this unexploded ordnance is being destroyed. We hope that anyone interested in our efforts will attend our upcoming regional workshop in October to see first-hand the successful model of cooperation between Palau's Government, non-governmental organizations, donors and the local community that is eradicating that scourge from our midst.

We would like to express our gratitude for the strong support and friendship of our partners for helping to get those and other important projects off the ground. Palau thanks especially the United States, Japan, Australia and the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Palau continues to believe that Taiwan's meaningful participation in the United Nations system will help to further promote the system's efficacy, goals and ideals, including those of the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Palau very much appreciates the President's choice of "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means" as the theme for this year's general debate. It is as important as ever that we commit to upholding the peace and condemn violence wherever it occurs. To that end, Palau condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent attacks on the diplomatic premises in the Middle East. We agree with President Obama that such attacks are "an assault on the very ideals upon which the United Nations was founded" (*A/67/PV.6, p. 11*). We must be vigilant in protecting all diplomatic missions, wherever they may be.

Closer to our shores in the Pacific, Palau is also hopeful that tensions in the East China Sea will dissipate, and that all of our neighbours can engage in a more peaceful dialogue.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon cautioned the world last week that we are wilfully blind when it comes to climate change. We are awash in reports telling us that the situation is dire. We have experienced more than 100 consecutive months of temperatures above global averages. Nine of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since the year 2000. Arctic sea ice is at its lowest level in recorded history. Coral reefs are disappearing at an alarming rate. Now, buried in the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change regarding the management of risk is advice to policymakers in small island States that, in certain cases, they may wish to consider relocating their populations. We assure the members of the Assembly that Palau has no intention of moving its people. Our islands are their home. They are the essence of Palau's very being. I can state with every confidence that Palau will pursue every legitimate recourse available before we concede hope.

The current situation at the UNFCCC is unacceptable. After more than 20 years of negotiations, we are running out of creative ways to say that countries are being destroyed. Sadly, it seems that the most vulnerable countries have become acceptable collateral damage. The world knows the causes of climate change. It is within our grasp to effect a solution. No army stands in our way. If something is not done soon, all the good, hard work to which Palau and the other island nations of the world have dedicated themselves will be for naught.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In conclusion, we know that the times we live in are turbulent, but we must heed our leaders' call to be guided by the Charter of the United Nations and the international rule of law. Palau will continue to do its part by being a moral voice for what is right, and hopefully, a model global citizen.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carsten Staur, head of the delegation of Denmark.

Mr. Staur (Demark): In a complex world, it is smart economics and also smart politics to focus on prevention rather than cure. This holds true whether we address the global economic crisis, sustainable development and poverty reduction, conflicts like the one in Syria, or the arms trade and disarmament. In that context, the inclusion of women in political decision-making processes is not only the right thing to do, it is one of the most powerful drivers for positive change.

Our natural resources are increasingly under pressure. By 2030, the world will need 50 per cent more food, 45 per cent more energy and 30 per cent more water. Thus, we must chart a new course for our common future and develop a new paradigm for economic growth and development that will make it possible to deal with those challenges and to create opportunities for future generations.

In June, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), we made some progress, laying down the foundations for the transformative process we need to pursue. But the house still has to be built, and the General Assembly must provide some of the important building blocks to do this. Defining sustainable development goals as part of the overall post-2015 international development framework, establishing the new high-level political forum, and upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme are all key parts of the agenda before us. Denmark strongly supports the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, launched in November 2011, and remains committed to its objectives. Access to sustainable energy, improved energy efficiency and increased use of renewable energy are all necessary conditions for achieving long-term sustainable development. At Rio+20, a green economy was finally recognized as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development.

We need to work in close partnership with both the private sector and civil society, if we are to succeed in transforming the global economy. The Danish Government, in partnership with the Governments of Mexico and Republic of Korea, last year created a public-private partnership among progressive Governments, global corporations, financial institutions and international organizations, including the United Nations, called the Global Green Growth Forum. At the second Forum meeting a week from now, in Copenhagen, the focus will be on resource efficiency and growth, reinforcing the need to decouple economic growth from unsustainable environmental pressures and to refocus efforts on the creation of decent jobs.

While making the last push for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, we will start preparing the post-2015 international development framework and embark on the discussion on how to best formulate new and more ambitious goals beyond 2015. As stated, the sustainable development goals should be an integrated part of this exercise. Denmark strongly supports the promotion of human rights as a means to development, rights being understood as indivisible and interdependent. Such a rights-based approach is about placing people — men and women — at the centre and in charge of their own development. And let me add, in the case of a woman, this also means the right to decide over her own body. That is why Denmark welcomes today's launch of the high-level task force for the International Conference on Population and Development. Important parts of the rights-based approach are access to information, involvement in decision-making and strengthening the voice of civil society.

Four decades ago, the United Nations set a target for developed countries to increase their official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of their gross national income. Every year since 1978 Denmark has surpassed the target, and our development assistance will continue to increase over the years to come. We call on other donors and potential donors, including emerging economies, to increase their assistance as well.

We see a great need for support to fragile States like Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan and Mali, where fragility and conflict hamper development and poverty reduction and may provide a breeding ground for all kinds of instability. We see positive signs in those countries, but there are still many challenges, and we therefore require strong and continuous political commitment, both within the countries themselves and on the part of the international community, in order to succeed. We in the international community need to take a closer look inside our toolbox and find the right mix of development assistance and security policy response, including ways of addressing terrorism and in some cases piracy. In conflict-affected and fragile countries, there is a need to understand that without security there can be no development and that without development there can be no security. Denmark actively participates in promoting the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, and we are currently co-chairing the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building. A peaceful and prosperous development in fragile States stands at the heart of Danish development policy, most recently exemplified in the Sahel region. Denmark shares the ambition of the International Dialogue to have peacebuilding and statebuilding goals firmly reflected in the post-2015 international development framework.

We must also use international cooperation to reduce the level of conflicts and to set clear rules for all to abide by. Unregulated and irresponsible trade of conventional weapons is often the direct cause of unbearable human suffering. It further destabilizes weak and fragile States and is a hindrance to development. There is an urgent need for a universal and legally binding arms trade treaty, and, together with Germany, Denmark has encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his strong personal engagement with respect to the convening of a second arms trade treaty conference early next year. Now is the time to act, and we call upon the members of the Assembly to successfully conclude negotiations on a treaty and to do so without delay.

Let me use this occasion to once again call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and more particularly on Iran, to comply with international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. It is in Iran's own interest to take concrete steps to build international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a cornerstone of international cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, Denmark actively supports the work of the Finnish facilitator to organize a conference on the Middle East as a zone free of weapons and materials of mass destruction.

For Denmark and the European Union, the rule of law is critical to international peace and security, human rights and development. It is a fundamental principle of good governance, whereby the State is accountable to its citizens and ensures their human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as their participatory rights. We therefore welcome the outcome of last week's High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (resolution 67/1) and the commitments made by Member States. Denmark also looks forward to an effective follow-up to the High-level Meeting.

International agreement on the responsibility to protect at the 2005 World Summit was a clear statement by the international community that the atrocities and large-scale tragedies of the last century must not be repeated in the twenty-first century. The global network of national focal points on the responsibility to protect — an initiative launched by the Governments of Denmark and Ghana, Costa Rica and Australia — is an approach to encourage and assist States in developing their national capacities and mechanisms for the prevention of mass atrocity crimes. We call on all States to appoint national focal points and to join the network, thereby demonstrating their commitment to decisive and timely prevention and response.

Even as I speak, we are witnessing in Syria a Government that is not living up to its moral and political obligations. Instead, it pursues a violent path of trying to quell the cry for freedom, for democratic reforms and for human rights. Despite several promises made to the international community during the last year, the Al-Assad regime has not stopped the violence. Instead we have only heard the sound of machine guns, heavy weapons and airplanes firing away at civilians. Since I stood here at this rostrum a year ago (see A/66/PV.29), the situation has only deteriorated. Last year about 2,600 people in Syria had died in the conflict. Now, more than 20,000 people have suffered that fate. The Syrian people are fleeing from the shooting spree, and a quarter of a million of them are now refugees in neighbouring countries. More than a million people inside Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance.

We condemn the brutal violence and massacres of civilians in the strongest terms. The time has come to stop the bloodshed and the suffering of the Syrian people. We cannot look away while the increasing sectarian violence spirals out of control, the humanitarian emergency escalates and the crisis spills over borders. President Al-Assad has lost all legitimacy and must step aside to allow for a peaceful and democratic transition. At the same time, those responsible for gross human rights violations must be brought to justice. We commend the very valuable work done by the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Syria. We note in particular that the Commission has stated that it is likely that crimes against humanity have been committed by the Syrian regime. The international community must act on that information. Denmark calls on the Security Council to refer the case of Syria and the serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the country to the International Criminal Court.

We urge the Security Council to unite and agree on strong measures, including comprehensive sanctions, to enforce the six-point plan endorsed by the Council. We cannot afford to continue waiting for a change of policy on the part of the regime, which it shows no sign of ever making. The Syrian people need action. At the same time, we strongly encourage the Syrian opposition groups to agree on a set of shared principles for working towards an inclusive, orderly and peaceful transition in Syria to a future free of Al-Assad and his brutal regime. While thanking former Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his valuable contribution to finding a lasting solution to the conflict, we now put our trust in the new Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and in his efforts at reaching a political solution.

The negative developments in Syria stand in sharp contrast to the situation in other countries that have been affected by the Arab winds of change. Calls for reforms, economic justice, democracy and respect for human rights have been heard, and in countries like Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Libya things are moving, and generally in the right direction. But there are also signs that progress is not universal, for example, the recent decision by the Bahraini Court of Cassation to uphold the convictions of 20 human rights activists, including a Danish national. Calling for reforms is not a crime, as was rightly pointed out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Last month's election of the new Prime Minister in Libya by a democratically elected parliament is a concrete example of progress, which makes it all the more difficult to comprehend the terrible and tragic attack on the United States Consulate in Benghazi, which we have strongly condemned. It was a sobering reminder of the serious challenges that still persist in countries in transition toward democracy. Democracy does not happen overnight. It takes years to develop, and attacks by extremists should not be allowed to derail a process that the majority of the people have fought so hard for. We stand firm by our commitments to Libya, and we stand firm in there being no justification for such attacks — none whatsoever.

It has been clear since the beginning of the Arab Spring that developments in the region make the Middle East peace process and a negotiated solution even more urgent and important. A year ago, the Quartet in its 23 September 2011 statement (SG/2178) called for a peace agreement to be signed no later than the end of 2012. Regrettably, we face a reality which does not augur well for that to happen. As things develop on the ground, the prospects for a two-State solution, providing for two independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable States living side by side in peace and security, are diminishing, not increasing. As we approach the twentieth anniversary of the Oslo Agreement, it is indeed time to reach a final agreement.

The world is undergoing profound changes. Current and new challenges call for international resolve and multilateral solutions. They call for strategic approaches, focusing on prevention and early action to dismantle problems, rather than on belated responses and interventions to deal with them when it is too late, too inefficient and much more costly. And they call for the United Nations, the strength of which lies in its unique legitimacy, to stand up and take the lead in addressing global challenges. The United Nations can make a real difference for the 7 billion people living on this planet. It is up to all of us to ensure that it does.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Portugal.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): I congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. His election represents one more important step in an already illustrious career, as well as a historic moment for Serbia, one that recognizes its courageous efforts to overcome a difficult recent past and to proceed with determination towards European integration.

Allow me also to express a word of recognition to Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser for his successful leadership of the Assembly in a particularly demanding year. We also offer praise and support to our Secretary-General for his commendable work, in particular for his efforts made to promote peace in a time of great challenges.

As Portugal is three months away from the conclusion of our mandate in the Security Council, to which we were elected by a significant majority of the Member States present in this Hall, we consider it appropriate to present an assessment to the General Assembly. We fulfilled our mandate with both rigour and transparency, always seeking to strengthen the credibility and efficiency of the principal organ entrusted with the protection of international peace and security. We were guided by the same principles that have always oriented our foreign policy and which have merited the trust of the Assembly, namely, the defence of the primacy of international law, the search for effective multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in the international architecture.

With equal coherence and firm resolve we have defended the promotion of human rights, the role of women, the protection of civilians, the strengthening of action defending children against violence and the protection of children in the context of armed conflict. Sustainable development, the fight against poverty, food security and the particularly devastating effects of climate change on small island developing States, which threaten their very existence, remain, for Portugal, fundamental pillars for our action within the United Nations.

With equal perseverance, we have sought to strengthen the role of the Security Council in the fight against new challenges to international peace and security, such as organized crime; the proliferation of illicit trafficking, terrorism and pandemics; the Council's capacity to prevent conflicts and to bring mediation into play; and its efforts to improve coordination with regional and subregional organizations. We have played an active role, and continue to do so, in the collective efforts to overcome crises, such as those that emerged in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Yemen, or the current challenges in Syria, Guinea-Bissau and Mali.

Our actions have always been driven by openness to dialogue and a constructive and balanced attitude, embodying our vocation to build bridges and generate consensus without abdicating our values and principles. We hope to have lived up to the high expectations and trust placed in us.

As Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, we sought to improve the internal working methods of the Council and its communication with the General Assembly, with a view to making it more effective and open and more in harmony with our times. We will present a report to the Assembly on the work undertaken on that issue.

It is important, however, to recognize that the credibility of the Security Council is also underpinned by a need for its composition to reflect the current geopolitical reality, one that is quite different from the dynamic that was in place in 1945. It is increasingly difficult for us, as it is for many others, to see that the increasing role of Brazil and India in the international scene has not yet been acknowledged with permanent seats on the Security Council, or that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat on the Council.

The Security Council continues to confront serious obstacles. The number of victims in Syria is exponentially increasing day by day. We remain impotent witnesses before a true humanitarian catastrophe and a generalized systematic violation of the most basic rights of the Syrian people. In addition, the catastrophe could have been avoided had the Syrian Government not chosen military force and brutal repression in response to the legitimate protests by its people, which systematically excluded any possibility of a politically negotiated outcome to the crisis.

However, there is no alternative to a political solution, one that supports the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and allows for a democratic transition driven by the Syrians themselves, one in which they see their wishes reflected. Increased militarization of the conflict will undoubtedly lead to even more suffering for the civilian population, threaten the territorial integrity of Syria and increase the risks of destabilization for its neighbours and indeed for the region as a whole.

The appointment of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, a diplomat whom we greatly respect, as the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria should be seen as a new opportunity for the parties to revisit their options, cease the violence and seriously engage in a process of political transition. For the Joint Special Representative's mission to be a success, the Security Council will finally have to exert joint, continued and effective pressure on all parties and most certainly on the Syrian authorities, who bear primary responsibility for the current situation.

The impasse in finding a lasting solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict is also of great concern and an increasingly urgent issue in the light of the recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa and the fight of the people of those regions for liberty, democracy and dignity. There will be no lasting peace, no stability and no security in the Middle East without a solution to the question of Palestine.

We understand and share Israel's legitimate security aspirations. Yet we also understand and share the frustration of the Palestinian people, for whom an independent Palestinian State is not simply an inalienable right, but also a straightforward question of justice. Only a comprehensive deal that is negotiated directly by the parties on the basis of United Nations resolutions and internationally recognized parameters and which solves the pending questions and is dedicated to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace will meet both the security concerns laid down by Israel and the aspirations of the Palestinian people for independence, liberty and dignity. We appeal to the Israelis and Palestinians to quickly restart direct negotiations.

Another regional issue still at an impasse and of serious concern in the Middle East is the question of a nuclear Iran. We regret the absence of any positive developments on the issue despite the significant diplomatic efforts under way and the application of mechanisms of international pressure. The onus of the situation is on Tehran.

In Africa, we are faced with a grave situation in the Sahel, particularly in Mali, which threatens the whole region and could spread throughout Western Africa, putting both stability and development at risk in a number of countries. As a result of a tapestry of historical, economic and social influences, we are witnessing an exponential growth in terrorism, with increasing links to organized transnational crime, drugs and other sorts of illicit trafficking. In that regard, the international community should be more active. Accordingly, we support the outcome of the recent High-level Meeting on the Sahel, which contributed to the creation of an integrated international strategy for the region.

It is against that grave regional background that the crisis in Guinea-Bissau is unfolding. The military coup of 12 April interrupted a democratic electoral process, violating the principles defended by the United Nations, as was clearly recognized in Security Council resolution 2048 (2012). It is imperative that the constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau be restored. That requires the appointment of an inclusive Government that includes the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, which is the party holding the majority in the National Assembly; permission for the legitimate leaders to return without restrictions on their civil and political rights; and the organization of free and credible elections. Any and all solutions to the present crisis will have to respect international legality and the constitutional order of Guinea-Bissau, and must be translated into an internal, inclusive, and credible political process capable of creating national stability.

To that end, coordinated action by the international community — the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and the European Union — is essential. Portugal is fully engaged and available to work with all interested parties in the process.

It is inconceivable that, in the twenty-first century, democratically elected African leaders are pushed aside by force and are made to live outside their countries. It is up to all of us to defend the principles of the Charter and to apply, without any ambiguities, the principle of zero tolerance in such situations. In that context, I note the increasingly relevant role of the African Union, which has been working in close coordination with the United Nations for the promotion and protection of peace and security on the African continent. I also take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Dlamini-Zuma on her election as President of the Commission of the African Union. That also represents a milestone in the strengthening of the role of women in Africa, which we also welcome with great satisfaction.

Allow me also to refer to a successful case and a good example, Timor-Leste. It is a successful example thanks, first of all, to the Timorese themselves, but also owing to the efficient support of the United Nations. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste will conclude its mandate at the end of the year. It will do so with the sense of having accomplished its purpose, thanks to the maturity shown by the Timorese people over recent years, as exemplified in the successful presidential and legislative elections held just a few months ago. A new cycle of cooperation between the international community and Timor-Leste is now opening in line with the priorities defined by that country's Government.

In that context, Portugal will continue to support Timor-Leste on its path to economic and social development, including the strengthening of its institutions and democratic values, as well as the rule of law and the promotion of the human rights of the Timorese people. Timor-Leste, like Guinea-Bissau, is a member State of the CPLP, along with Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe. Within the CPLP we share a common language and history, but we have also developed shared efforts towards the defence of universal values, through active multilateralism within the framework of the United Nations and the regional organizations to which we belong.

The significance of the Portuguese language as a language of global communication, business and culture, with about 250 million speakers, should be taken advantage of by the international community. For that reason, we will continue to work together to have Portuguese recognized as an official language of the United Nations.

I referred at the beginning of my statement to Portugal's commitment to multilateralism as the most effective means for finding common solutions to the global challenges that we face. I specifically noted our efforts in the defence of human rights and in the promotion of sustainable development. In that context, we support the outcomes achieved at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in part thanks to the notable efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Brazilian Government.

We continue to defend the universal, indivisible and interdependent rights of all human beings, be they political, economic, social or cultural. We have a solid commitment to humanitarian law and to the excellent work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In that context, with the commitment to defend and promote human rights and with the same sense of responsibility with which we undertook our current mandate in the Security Council, Portugal has announced its candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the years 2015 to 2017. We hope to be able to merit, once again, the trust of the Assembly and to serve, for the first time, in that body.

The changes in today's world call for the promotion of a culture of dialogue on a global scale based on tolerance and the respect for human dignity. The United Nations should remain in the vanguard of those efforts, namely through initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilizations. I would like to congratulate the High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations for his leadership and work in the defence of peace and of a better understanding among peoples. Indeed, the dialogue among different cultures, civilizations and religions is at the very heart of the work of the United Nations.

In conclusion, today, as in the past, the United Nations has to reflect on what it is and what we collectively want it to be. It should translate the indispensable convergence of the common will of States into actions that contribute to a better world. Its central objective should be the maintenance of international peace and security and greater prosperity for all. Portugal stands steadfast in its commitment to those efforts.

The Acting President: I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

Our world is afflicted by new political, economic and social turmoil that has disrupted the peaceful coexistence of the peoples of the world and reduced the quality of life for millions of human beings. New neocolonial wars have been launched aimed at seizing the natural resources of developing countries.

The proponents of capitalism, while attempting to overcome the deep economic crisis that has affected the global financial system, have been resorting to new imperialistic strategies and overexploiting workers, including those in developing countries. The social welfare State and the social achievements attained after the Second World War are now in the process of being dismantled. The new imperialists have sought to transfer responsibility for the crisis to those born in other countries and to immigrants, whereas the current economic crisis was caused primarily by financial speculators. Social policies are gradually being reduced or eliminated. The middle class has been growing poor. Hunger, poverty and unemployment are reappearing in the developed countries and are spreading around the world. Suffering and despair are increasing.

Meanwhile, Latin America and the Caribbean have managed to tackle, with relative success, the impact of those global economic and financial imbalances. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean reports that the economies in our region have had a significant rebound beginning in 2010, which enabled our region to mitigate the effects of the 2008 to 2009 crisis. Latin America and the Caribbean are well positioned on the world stage, thanks to the strengthening of initiatives in the area of regional integration, designed to strengthen political and economic autonomy. Therefore, the domination that the imperial Powers and their multinationals have imposed on developing countries is gradually being overcome.

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America is a new coordination mechanism for dialogue guided by cooperation, complementarity and solidarity among sovereign nations. It represents an alternative for the liberation and independence of our countries.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) are regional spaces of multilateral cooperation aimed at strengthening the unity of Latin America and the Caribbean and are constructing a multipolar, balanced and just world in which the sovereign equality of States will prevail as well as a culture of peace in a world free of nuclear weapons and of weapons of mass destruction. CELAC and UNASUR have inspired social and human development, with equity and inclusion, and seek to eradicate poverty and overcome inequalities in the region. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we are seeing a new type of regionalism that is being promoted by diplomatic solidarity.

Today, the unipolar system of imperial domination is in crisis. A pluripolar and multi-centred system has been coming into being, in which emerging countries and new regional blocs are able to contribute to the democratization of international relations. Meanwhile, the imperial Powers have been promoting, within the United Nations, a new regulatory framework enabling foreign intervention in the internal affairs of States, trying to get States to give up their sovereignty, political independence and self-determination. Those Powers have become the judges, jurors and administrators of internal conflicts in the countries of the South, resorting to interventionist initiatives that are conceived here at the United Nations and implemented through the Security Council.

A new international order, truly based on the legal equality of States, is an imperative demand. Reform of the United Nations is necessary. The Security Council must become more democratic if it wishes to express the will of all nations. The General Assembly is begging for revitalization, and the Secretary-General should be elected democratically, by all Member States. International peace and security cannot be built on the basis of privileges for a few.

The international financial architecture that emerged at Bretton Woods is anti-democratic. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are never taken into account when decisions are made on vital economic and financial matters that affect all of humankind. Reform of the global economic and financial system must be addressed in the United Nations, and all countries should have an equal voice in the search for solutions to problems related to development.

In Syria we are following the same interventionist script that was applied in Libya. Imperial Powers are fomenting ethnic, political and religious divisions between Syrians and between Syria and its neighbours. They are shamelessly supplying weapons to the rebel forces in an attempt to overthrow the Government of that Arab country. Venezuela supports the peace efforts being made by the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. We should encourage political dialogue between Syrians, but we reject foreign intervention and the deadly policy of regime change. We support the positions of Russia, China and other countries on the issue; they demand that the Security Council respect the territorial unity and integrity of the Syrian State. The Non-Aligned Movement can play a proactive role in helping to solve that crisis.

The Bolivarian Government reaffirms its support for the existence of a Palestinian State, independent and sovereign, within internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We also reiterate our support for Palestine's admission as a State Member of the United Nations with full rights.

We are concerned about the warmongering threats of the Governments of Israel and the United States against Iran. A military attack on that Persian nation would have fatal consequences for world peace. We recognize the sovereign right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Respect for cultures and religions ensures the peaceful coexistence of the human beings who populate our planet. Within the crisis of capitalism, we have once again seen a resurgence in Western countries of racial hatred, xenophobia and hostility to other cultures and religions. The reprehensible video against the great Prophet Muhammad and Islam has naturally provoked protests among Muslim peoples. Such anti-Islamic expressions are not random; they are part of a political and ideological climate that fosters hatred against those who are different.

We deplore the fact that freedom of speech is being used to offend religions and denigrate religious prophets. What are the limits of the freedom of expression? Is it an absolute freedom that allows one to besmirch people's deepest beliefs and religious feelings? Venezuela rejects exhibitions of xenophobia against Muslims and supports dialogue between cultures and civilizations aimed at promoting peace and brotherhood among human beings. At the same time, we call for respect for the inviolability of diplomatic premises and the dignity of human life.

The United States continues to maintain its criminal economic and financial blockade of the fraternal people of Cuba. Venezuela emphasizes its solidarity with the Government of the Republic of Cuba and demands an end to that unilateral coercive measure. It is ironic that a country that practices State terrorism and shelters the well-known terrorist Luís Posada Carriles includes Cuba on its list of countries that support terrorism. We demand that Cuba be removed from that arbitrary classification, whose sole purpose is to justify the economic, commercial and financial embargo against its people.

Venezuela appreciates all efforts on the part of the United Nations to improve its mediation capabilities in crisis situations that could have negative consequences for international peace and stability. The United Nations should act in a neutral and impartial fashion, with a view to strengthening its ability to mediate in cases in which it is voluntarily and expressly requested to do so by the parties involved in international conflicts. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have very valuable experience in the use of dialogue and mediation for the settlement of disputes. The Rio Group made a major contribution in helping to end the terrible armed conflicts in Central America in recent years, and UNASUR has also helped to prevent and settle disputes in our region.

Venezuela welcomes the announcement made by the President of Colombia, Mr. Juan Manuel Santos, that negotiations will begin between his Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), with a view to achieving stable and lasting peace. Venezuela, Cuba, Chile and Norway are taking part in the dialogue process as supporters, by agreement between the Colombian authorities and FARC. The Bolivarian Government is backing peace and reconciliation for the Colombian people.

Venezuela supports the Republic of Argentina's right of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, the South Georgia Islands and the South Sandwich Islands, and the surrounding maritime areas. We reiterate our call to the United Kingdom to begin talks with that fraternal South American country in order to arrive at a negotiated and peaceful solution to that dispute.

On Sunday, 7 October, democratic elections will be held in Venezuela to elect the President of the Republic. They will be transparent and credible, because, as former United States President Jimmy Carter said a few days ago, we have the most modern electoral system in the world. Between 1999 and 2012 we have held 14 clean national elections, a world record in political participation. We should issue a warning, here in this forum, that anti-democratic national elements, in alliance with foreign interests, are attempting to use violence in order to subvert the will of the people. The Venezuelan people are prepared, however, once again to defend their democratic and revolutionary achievements.

Venezuela needs a democratic opposition. Pluralism and diversity coexist in democracy. And peace is the only path for the homeland of Simón Bolívar. President Hugo Chávez Frías is guaranteeing the continuity of our sovereign and supportive foreign policy, focused on improving Latin American and Caribbean unity, enhancing cooperation with the peoples of the South, and building a multicentric and multipolar world, without imperial hegemonies. Similarly, he is guaranteeing the continuity of a national policy based on social justice.

The successes of the Bolivarian Revolution are evident. Venezuela has met the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals before 2015. The number of households in extreme poverty has fallen dramatically, from 21 per cent in 1998 to 7 per cent in 2010. Social investment in my country is among the highest in the world. Venezuela has the highest minimum wage in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the Gini coefficient, our country is the most egalitarian in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, we are ranked tenth among the best-fed peoples in the world. We are the country with the fifth-highest percentage of university enrolment in the world. Education and health care are free. All Venezuelans, without exception, have access to those rights.

Those extraordinary achievements in economic, social and cultural rights have been attained in the context of a participatory democracy, in which civil and political rights are fully respected, as never before in our country's history. The Venezuelan people have regained their sovereignty and self-determination. A revolution for freedom, justice and equality is under way. That is the Bolivarian revolution.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vince Henderson, head of the delegation of Dominica.

Mr. Henderson (Dominica): On behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I would like to congratulate Mr. Jeremić on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and to wish him every success. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for the able manner in which he presided over the sixty-sixth session.

The sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly has convened at a time when we face myriad challenges — the impact of climate change, civil conflicts, hunger and starvation, poverty, HIV/AIDS and chronic non-communicable diseases. Those challenges, however, are equally matched by the tremendous opportunities created by the rapid advancement in science and technology and the unprecedented level of international cooperation.

We therefore need the political will to harness those opportunities for the benefit of our peoples. That would necessarily require the transformation of multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, including its organs and agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to reflect equity and inclusion. Those changes must be supported by a shift in our systems of production and consumption and by a new economic system, built on the principles of fairness and differentiated treatment on the basis of the unique challenges of countries, especially the vulnerability of small island developing States (SIDS). I am confident that, with such an approach, we will be able to overcome those challenges in a functioning multilateral system.

The President returned to the Chair.

The unsustainable consumption and production systems that continue to deplete the world's resources and that simultaneously contribute to global warming remain a major threat to the survival of those of us who live close to the world's oceans. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was a commendable effort by the international community to take stock of the human impact on the Earth's resources and to commit to reversing the present trend. The outcome document, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), falls short of our expectations. However, it remains a work in progress and presents a useful platform for the ongoing discussion of multilateral resolutions to the growing concern of sustainable development. More important, the outcome document is indicative of what the international community can achieve when collective energies are harnessed to present an international response.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is pleased that Rio+20 reaffirmed an international commitment to support small island developing States. We especially welcome the agreement to convene the third Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS in 2014 in the Pacific region. In fact, we are of the view that the third Global Conference will provide an opportunity for the implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

As a small island developing State, Dominica is committed to the fundamental principle of environmental sustainability. That is clearly demonstrated by our approach to sustainable development as the "Nature Island". The sustainable use of our natural resources has contributed to our tourism product, while at the same time blessing our citizens with the most beautiful place on Earth to call home. Notwithstanding that, our great vulnerability continues to put us at the mercy of countries that promote and employ unsustainable practices. The challenges include an international economic system dominated by the strong and the powerful that pays little or no regard to the vulnerable. If multilateralism is to survive, we need to focus on correcting that lopsided system, which is destined to annihilate SIDS.

Dominica's very vulnerability to the effects of global warming underscores our commitment to a multilateral approach aimed at combating climate change. The impact of climate change continues to manifest itself in a number of ways, resulting in greater challenges to the survival of SIDS. The failure to date to reach a legally binding outcome on climate change is a cause of grave concern. While the debate continues, the challenges to our islands increase.

We are encouraged, however, by the fact that the recently concluded climate talks in Bangkok prepared a fertile ground for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha later this year. Nevertheless, Dominica continues to stress the importance of extending and amending the Kyoto Protocol before it lapses. The timely creation of a road map for a new legally binding document must be treated as a matter of urgency. We look forward to the Doha talks, of which we have great expectations.

One major contributor to climate change is the consumption of fossil fuels for the production of electricity. The importation of fossil fuels also has the greatest impact on the economic vulnerability of many small island developing States. Addressing energy issues is therefore central to responding to the challenges of climate change and sustainable development. Today, there is still a significant portion of many remote and rural island communities that has little or no access to modern and affordable energy services.

The low-carbon economies in SIDS therefore provide an opportunity to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, while decreasing dependence on imported fossil fuels. By generating their own energy from natural renewable sources, SIDS will be able to achieve energy security. The savings realized from avoiding the cost of importing fossil fuels could be used for adaptation and developmental needs. For that and other reasons, the SIDS Sustainable Energy Initiative, known as SIDS DOCK, was instituted. The Initiative currently provides a global platform for SIDS to pursue their renewable energy ambitions by building capacity and by providing technical support to member States. The Governments of Denmark and Japan, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank continue to play a significant role in making energy independence a reality for SIDS. The recent partnership with the Clinton Foundation has given new hope to a number of islands that are vigorously pursuing their renewable energy aspirations.

Dominica has the honour of serving as Chair of SIDS DOCK. My delegation, on its own behalf as well as that of SIDS DOCK, fully endorses the Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in Small Island Developing States, signed by ministers and other heads of delegation of the Alliance of Small Island States at the ministerial conference held in Bridgetown in May. The commitments made and targets set to increase the percentage of renewable energy and increase energy efficiency in energy portfolios are testimony to our region's commitment to the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative. We congratulate the Secretary-General on launching the initiative, which SIDS DOCK joined and is committed to actively supporting.

Dominica, the "Nature Island", continues to pursue the development of its geothermal resources. We are pleased to announce that the recently concluded test-drilling in the Roseau Valley has confirmed that our geothermal resources have the potential to supply our domestic needs and provide an exportable surplus. That will allow us to move away from the importation of fossil fuel for the generation of electricity within the next five years, while also reducing the cost of electricity for our people. At the same time, the development of a power plant for export to the French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique will provide a source of revenue for the island. Negotiations are ongoing and expected to conclude by the end of 2012. Work is expected to commence on the first power plant in the first quarter of 2013. Dominica's energy initiative has the potential to transform its economy and to improve the quality of life of its people. The Government of Dominica, as trustee of the island's resources on behalf of its people, is therefore ensuring that it manages that process responsibly.

We have sought and are receiving assistance from some of the most reputable consultants in the world. The support of the Clinton Climate Initiative has allowed us to navigate through the complex challenges of the project. We therefore wish to express our gratitude to President Bill Clinton for his continued support in that initiative. We anticipate that, by 2017, all of our electricity needs will be met by a combination of sources, namely, hydro and geothermal. By 2020 we expect to be exporting electricity to our neighbouring islands via submarine cables. That, coupled with our sustainable development practices, means that Dominica will go beyond carbon neutrality to being carbon-negative by the year 2020.

Like Dominica, many SIDS are pursuing national renewable energy initiatives, and more than 20 SIDS have made pledges under the Sustainable Energy for All initiative. However, unsustainable debt and the lack of technology make it impossible for them to achieve their goals. We therefore invite other developed countries and the international community to join the Governments of Denmark and Japan and the Clinton Climate Initiative in the SIDS DOCK partnership, and the Government of Norway in its Energy for All initiative, in providing critical support to SIDS.

The global community should heed the prolonged, and in some cases recent, cries of peoples around the world. The response should not be selective or be based on narrow national interests. Injustice anywhere and in any form should not be tolerated. The so-called Arab Spring has been one expression of people's discontent. The international community must support the wishes of people as they struggle to create their own democratic systems, driven by their aspirations.

The recent spate of attacks on United States missions and personnel, or attacks on the diplomatic facilities of any country, does nothing to advance the causes of those who may be marginalized or who feel offended by other democratic systems. Regardless of what may have led to the protests, the Commonwealth of Dominica condemns those unjustified attacks, which resulted in the unfortunate loss of life of United States Ambassador Christopher Stevens and his colleagues.

While we are heartened by the attention that has been given to the recent outcries from some corners of the globe, we remain concerned that in our part of the world the cries of people who have been suffering for decades have aroused less sympathy. The suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Haiti persists, much to the concern of Dominica and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We are grateful to those countries that have responded and to others that have supported and continue to support the rebuilding efforts in Haiti. However, we are still far from assisting the people of Haiti to reach a state of normalcy where they can enjoy the basic necessities of life. We therefore call upon the international community to heed the cry of Haiti and to provide support in the rebuilding efforts.

The Caribbean region also continues to witness the unheeded call for the discontinuation of the economic, financial and trade embargo on our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Cuba. We call upon the Government of the United States to allow the people of Cuba to be fully integrated into the global trading system, thereby enabling them to improve their lives and allowing the world to benefit from their tremendous contributions, especially in the area of science and technology.

The international trade, transfer and use of conventional arms, weapons, munitions and ammunition continue to threaten international peace and security. Dominica, like its sister nations in CARICOM, is not immune to that debilitating phenomenon. Our region continues to be affected by an increase in gangs and violent criminal activities born out of the trade and transfer of illicit arms and drugs throughout the Caribbean region, from North to South America. We are therefore perturbed that, despite four weeks of rigorous deliberations and intense negotiations, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty did not result in the finalization of the treaty. However, like the rest of our CARICOM colleagues, we believe that the 26 July text from the Chair of the Conference provides a blueprint for a possible final document. As leaders, the task is now ours to finalize a legally binding document in the interests of the protection of our people.Dominica remains optimistic that that can be achieved during the current session of the General Assembly, and we reaffirm our commitment to the realization of a robust arms trade treaty.

Dominica would like to take this opportunity to applaud the role and efforts of the United Nations in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the global community. The long-term socioeconomic development of many nations, particularly SIDS such as Dominica, is severely compromised because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in our region. Associated with that illicit trade is the trafficking of narcotics through the Caribbean region, from South to North America, which has presented new challenges to the maintenance of peace and security in our region. It underscores the urgent need for a legally binding international instrument that addresses the control and monitoring of the illicit trade in small arms among States and non-State actors.

In conclusion, Dominica remains committed to collaborating with the United Nations and all its agencies, as well as with all Member States, to strengthen the mission of this noble body that, notwithstanding its imperfections, is critical to maintaining world peace and security. We reaffirm our confidence in the United Nations system as the ultimate negotiating and deliberative body for addressing the major challenges confronting the world.

May we all rise to the occasion and resolve to bring peace, security and prosperity to every corner of the globe.

Before I finish, Sir, I hope that, given that I am the last speaker, you will allow me the latitude to address a word of thanks to the interpreters and the rest of the United Nations staff for their hard work over the past week. We know that their task has not been easy, and we appreciate their contribution.

May God bless the United Nations. May God bless us all.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

Several representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan would like to exercise its right of reply with regard to remarks made by India's Minister for External Affairs this morning (see A/67/PV.19).

Let me begin by emphasizing that the reference to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in the statement by the President of Pakistan (see A/67/PV.7) was not unwarranted. Let me also make it absolutely clear that Jammu and Kashmir is neither an integral part of India nor has it ever been. I will now quote the relevant excerpt from the President's statement.

> "Our principled position on territorial disputes remains the bedrock of our foreign policy. We will continue to support the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to peacefully choose their destiny in accordance with the Security Council's long-standing resolutions on this matter. Kashmir remains a symbol of the failures, rather than the strengths, of the United Nations system. We feel that a resolution of these issues can be arrived at only in an environment of cooperation.
>
> "By normalizing trade relations, we want to create a regional South Asian narrative. Such a narrative will provide an environment that will mutually benefit the countries of our region."

The President of Pakistan said no more, no less.

Mr. Sahraei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today, a Western delegation made an allegation against the Iranian nuclear programme. The same accusation was also made by a few other Western countries during the Assembly's general debate. In exercising our right of reply, I would like to make the following statement.

Like the other parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Islamic Republic of Iran has an inalienable right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. Iran is firmly determined to exercise that right in full. At the same time, we are fully committed to our obligations under the NPT. Our commitment to non-proliferation remains intact.

The nuclear activities of my country are and always have been exclusively for peaceful purposes. The non-diversion of the declared nuclear material in Iran has been repeatedly confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In line with its obligations under its IAEA Safeguards Agreement, Iran fully cooperates with the Agency. All activities at our nuclear sites are under the IAEA's 24-hour surveillance cameras, and the Agency's resident inspectors regularly visit the sites and measure and seal enriched-uranium containers.

The IAEA Director General, in all of his relevant reports, including his latest report on 13 June, has stated that

> "the Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities and LOFs [location outside facilities] declared by Iran under its safeguards agreement".

It is therefore evident that these politically motivated allegations are without any foundation. The objective behind such claims, which were made by a few Western countries that are either nuclear-weapon States or under the nuclear umbrella, is an attempt to divert attention from their own abysmal record on non-compliance with their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT.

Instead of making unfounded allegations denying the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, they should comply with their legal obligations under the NPT, in particular by freezing modernization of their nuclear arsenals, immediately withdrawing their nuclear weapons from other countries, refraining from nuclear-weapon-sharing and from cooperating with non-parties to the NPT, and eliminating all their nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the unwarranted focus by those Western countries on Iran's peaceful programme and their simultaneous deadly silence on the nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction of the Zionist regime is entirely hypocritical. Iran's exclusively peaceful nuclear programme is not a threat. The only threat to regional and international peace and security is the Zionist regime, which has more than 200 nuclear warheads and is the only non-party to the NPT in the Middle East. There is no greater source of insecurity and instability in the Middle East and beyond than the Israeli regime, which tries to identify red lines for the peaceful nuclear activities of others, when it itself, confident in its great patron, has crossed every red line in the course of its history and committed every type of crime, from crimes of aggression to war crimes and crimes against humanity, even as it continues to threaten other countries.

That regime must accede to all treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction, in particular the NPT, without conditions or further delay, put all of its nuclear activities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement and fully comply with all its international obligations.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, while Iran stands ready to engage in a serious and constructive negotiation with interested parties, based on justice and mutual respect and without preconditions, it will never compromise on its inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, including its inherent right to develop a national nuclear fuel cycle.

Mr. Kumar (India): I take the floor in response to the gratuitous references by the delegation of Pakistan about the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is and has always been an integral part of India. It is ironic that those comments were made by the representative of a country that persists in its illegal occupation of a part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Those references constitute a clear interference in the internal affairs of India. We reject them in their entirety.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to speak in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia today at the 19th meeting, in the Assembly's general debate.

It is clear that the statement of the Foreign Minister of Armenia represents yet another example of utter falsehood. It is also illustrative of Armenia's uninterrupted attempts to create the wrong impression of the real situation on the ground and to deflect the attention of the international community from the urgent need to address the main problems caused the continuing aggression against Azerbaijan by that Member State. However, such a futile effort easily collapses, like a house of cards, against the background of facts and testifies to a diametrically opposite situation.

By trying to criticize and lecture neighbouring countries, the Foreign Minister of Armenia fell into his usual forgetfulness. Otherwise, he would have recollected that his country unleashed the war and perpetrated aggression against Azerbaijan, carried out ethnic cleansing and committed other heinous crimes against Azerbaijan's civilian population in the course of the war. Most important, he passed over in silence the fact that it was indeed Armenia that used military force to occupy the territories of Azerbaijan, and not the other way around.

It is curious that the Foreign Minister of Armenia believes that his country and the international community speak in one language regarding the Daghlyq Garabagh issue and that Armenia's position is in line with documents adopted by international organizations. Needless to say, the whole foundation of the international legal order will collapse if that happens. The words of the Armenian Minister represent an obvious falsification so characteristic of Armenian high-ranking officials.

It would be pertinent to recall Armenians' persistent non-compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly, which, inter alia, demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The short memory of Armenian officials also extends to numerous documents and decisions of other international organizations calling for an end to the occupation of Azerbaijani lands. The most recent are the final documents adopted earlier this year at the summits of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which unequivocally supported the position of Azerbaijan. It should be particularly noted that the President of Armenia refused to participate in the summits of NATO and NAM only because of the approach they took in regard to the conflict and the principles to be applied for its resolution.

Another recent example includes the reaction of the international community to the so-called legal elections conducted by Armenia in July in the occupied Daghlyq Garabagh region of Azerbaijan. In their statement and communications, international organizations and individual States voiced their unequivocal protests against the so-called elections and declared the provocative action null and void.

The statement of the Foreign Minister of Armenia contains groundless comments on the military budget increase of Azerbaijan. Complaints in that regard are obviously ridiculous, as they are voiced by the representative of an aggressor State in regard to the military capability of its victim. At the same time, it is well known that the annual defence spending of Azerbaijan remains in line with its overall budget increases, that Azerbaijan continues to spend a much smaller percentage of its gross domestic product on its army than does Armenia, and that the size of the armed forces of Azerbaijan is proportional to its population, territory and the length of its borders and remains less than that of Armenia. Indeed, a comparative analysis shows that in correlation to its population, territory, annual budget and gross domestic product, Armenia is the most militarized country of the South Caucasus in terms of military expenditures, foreign military assistance, military personnel and quantity of procured armaments.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia spent much of his statement conveying his country's distorted perception of the case of Ramil Safarov, relating to an incident that took place during a NATO-sponsored training course in Budapest. I would like to recall that the detailed answer to the irresponsible speculations of the Armenian side in that regard is contained in our letter of 17 September 2012, addressed to the Secretary-General and circulated as document A/66/905.

While trying to introduce that case as allegedly the manifestation of anti-Armenian prejudices, the Foreign Minister of Armenia disregards the fact that, unlike his own country, Azerbaijan has preserved its ethnic and cultural diversity to the present day and that many Armenians are living not only in the occupied Daghlyq Garabagh region, but also in the capital and other major cities of Azerbaijan. On the contrary, the international community has repeatedly expressed its indignation with the undisguised promotion by the leadership of Armenia of the odious ideas of racial superiority, ethnic and religious incompatibility, and hatred towards Azerbaijan and other neighbouring nations. The relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations have repeatedly expressed their serious concerns about the spirit of intolerance prevailing in Armenia and the discriminatory policies and practices pursued in that country. It should be pointed out that the same policies and practices are being implemented by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, where it has carried out ethnic cleansing against all non-Armenians and where it has established the ethnically constructed subordinate separatist entity, which is ultimately nothing other than the product of aggression and racial discrimination.

The responsibility of Armenia's political and military leadership for the atrocious crimes committed during the war has been well attested to at the international level and even admitted to by Armenia's high-ranking officials. The most shocking revelation is certainly the one made by the current President of Armenia, Mr. Serzh Sargsyan. In his interview with British journalist Thomas de Waal of 15 December 2000, in response to the question as to whether things could have happened differently and whether he had any regrets about the deaths of thousands of people, the Armenian Head of State answered that he had absolutely no regrets, since such upheavals were necessary even if thousands had to die. The full transcript of the interview is available online on the Carnegie Endowment website. Those who are interested in arriving at the truth may familiarize themselves with that piece of evidence, along with numerous other documents that totally disprove what we heard today from the Minister for Foreign of Affairs of Armenia.

Everything I have mentioned definitevely dispels the myths of Armenia as an eternal victim. In reality, by disregarding the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, by continuing to illegally occupy the territories of Azerbaijan, by deliberately denying the right of more than 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes, by pursuing a racist ideology and by misinterpreting the fundamental norms and principles of international law, Armenia clearly demonstrates who is actually responsible for undermining regional peace, security and stability.

Mr. Kazhoyan (Armenia): I apologize for taking the floor at this late hour. It was not my intention. However, I must reply to the comments made just now by the representative of Azerbaijan.

The reply by the representative of Azerbaijan was based on even more lies; not a single word corresponded to the truth. The statement made at the 19th plenary meeting earlier today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia highlighted all those huge — to put it mildly — discrepancies. I will not go into detail and explain that whatever happened 20 years ago was the expression of the right to self-determination by the people of Nagorno Karabakh, and the fact that the realization of their absolutely legal constitutional right was met with hostilities, massacres and war by Azerbaijan against the peaceful population. Who can blame Armenians of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic for not wanting to live in the same country as their murderers?

Nothing that Azerbaijan says to the world from any rostrum can be considered factual. On the contrary, it is a constant barrage of lies, combined with anti-Armenian racist rhetoric. I suppose their strategy is to tell such unbelievable lies and to repeat them so often that sooner or later people will get used to them. An oriental saying says, "No matter how many times you say 'sweet dates', you still will not feel sweetness in your mouth". That is just wishful thinking. What can one expect from a country whose President openly declares that the Armenians of the world are the enemy of Azerbaijan? I believe that is what is known as xenophobia and it is punishable by law, at least in my country and the rest of the civilized world that we come from and that the United Nations was created to create and cherish.

Azerbaijan is the only country in the world that boasts of its astronomical military expenditures. I remember the time when a rising defence budget was not something to be proud of. But they shout out loudly about it and threaten our being in Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan is a country where someone who has killed a foreigner, an Armenian, is considered a national hero. In my country a murderer would have received what is prescribed by law. The murderer of a sleeping person would have been branded as not only a murderer but a coward. No Armenian in his right mind would live in Baku, despite the many examples the representative of Azerbaijan may bring of Armenians living in Azerbaijan. Even the world chess champion Gary Kasparov recently said that he will never go to Baku until the Nagorno Karabakh issue is resolved and Azerbaijan halts the anti-Armenian hysteria.

Azerbaijan uses the tactic that the best defence is a good offence, hoping that if they put the blame on everybody else for what the world condemns them for, that will save them. However, no one can manipulate world public opinion, not even in oil-dollars-rich Azerbaijan. Therefore no Azerbaijani, and especially no Azerbaijani official, has any historical, moral or legal right to tell the people of Nagorno Karabakh how to live, where to live or how independent to be.

Mr. Desta (Eritrea): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply in connection with the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Djibouti during his address to the Assembly at the

19th plenary meeting this morning. My delegation was surprised by the Minister's statement about our country.

My delegation does not wish to dwell on the events of 2008, as we have exhaustively addressed the matter in other forums. In a forward-looking manner my delegation would like to stress the following points to set the record straight.

First, Eritrea has always desired good-neighbourly relations with Djibouti, based on mutual respect and economic cooperation.

Secondly, Djibouti bears responsibility for the two-day skirmish of 2008.

Thirdly, in June 2010 the Presidents of Eritrea and Djibouti signed a peace agreement entrusting the Amir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, to mediate the border dispute.

Fourthly, the issue of prisoners of war is part and parcel of the agreement, and both sides agreed to address it. Regrettably, the issue is singled out as a point in the campaign against Eritrea in different forums, including in the Security Council. That raises a serious question about whether the other side is prepared to resolve the matter in accordance with the letter and spirit of the accord, and it has unnecessarily prolonged the peace process.

Fifthly, Eritrea has fully fulfilled its obligations under the agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1862 (2009). It has withdrawn its troops from the common border, which since then has been monitored by Qatari peacekeepers.

Sixthly, Eritrea stresses the ongoing mediation by the Amir of Qatar as the best opportunity for both countries to resolve the outstanding issues, paving the way for cooperative and normal relations. What remains now is for both Governments to engage in good faith in the Amir of Qatar's mediation facilitation. It is important to refrain from engaging in inflammatory statements that could potentially harm the ongoing mediation process. Eritrea affirms it will act in good faith and will remain fully committed to the peace process.

Let me conclude by commending the Amir of Qatar for his mediation role. I also wish to pay tribute to the Qatari peacekeepers deployed along the common border between our two countries.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): I speak in response to remarks made earlier by the representative of India. The disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir is established by Security Council resolutions and agreed upon by both Pakistan and India. A characterization of Jammu and Kashmir or any part of its territory as part of India is therefore untenable. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have yet to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): The remarks just made by the delegation of Armenia, full of distortions and misinterpretations, demonstrate how far that Member State is from engaging in a constructive search for peace in the region. In fact, the delegation of Armenia has introduced nothing new and has once again abused its right to speak from the high rostrum of the General Assembly. The delegation of Armenia did not even want to take the trouble of listening carefully to what we have said, preferring instead to read out a text containing its set of standard falsifications.

As a result, we have heard irrelevant and out-of-context comments, which obviously fail to respond to our demands. Having seen no reason to prolong discussion on the issue at this stage of our deliberations, we would like to express our confidence that Armenia's destructive political agenda is fated never to be realized. Armenia will be obliged to cease its provocative policy, to ensure that the occupation of Azerbaijan's territory is ended, to renounce its territorial claims on neighbouring nations and to establish civilized relations with all countries of the region.

Mr. Kumar (India): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply because, regrettably, the delegation of Pakistan has once again raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have peacefully chosen their destiny in accordance with democratic practices, and they continue to do so. We therefore reject in their entirety the untenable comments from the delegate of Pakistan.

Mr. Kazhoyan (Armenia): I am sorry for having to take the floor for the second time. I really wonder how the memory of Azerbaijan's delegation works.

In 1988, the people of Nagorno Karabakh peacefully ask for independence from Azerbaijan; they are attacked by Azerbaijan. Armenians organize self-defence; Azerbaijan unleashes a large-scale war from 1992 to 1994. The people of Nagorno Karabakh stop the

Azerbaijan aggression and declare the independence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. Those are brief historical facts that took place not so long ago and it is not very difficult to remember those basic textbook facts and stop turning everything upside down.

The only gauge for measuring the sincerity of Azerbaijan's words is their participation in the negotiations of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the responses to the documents on the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict adopted in the frameworks of the OSCE summit held in 2010 in Astana and the ministerial conferences of Helsinki in 2008, Athens in 2009, Almaty in 2010 and Vilnius in 2011. Also, the statements of the Presidents of the co-Chair countries in the framework of the Group of Eight Summit in L'Aquila in 2009, Muskoka in 2010 and Deauville in 2011 and during the Group of 20 Summit in Los Cabos in 2012 are proof of that.

Armenia's position is in line with those documents. Armenia and the international community are speaking in one language with regard to the Nagorno Karabakh issue. It is time for Azerbaijan to listen to the voice of the world.

I would also like to quote another statement that was delivered in the Hall at the 20th plenary meeting today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus:

> "Belarus is fully convinced that any attempt to make someone do something against their will is doomed to fail. Are we not learning the lessons of the past? After all, neither weapons nor wealth constitute the greatest source of power on Earth. That power stems rather from the spirit of self-determination. If a nation has embarked on its own path of peaceful and progressive development, no then no external force is able to stop it in its tracks. Battles can be won against such a nation, but never wars."

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the exercise of the right of reply.

I will now offer some concluding remarks on the general debate.

Statement by the President

The President: We have come to the end of the general debate of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I would like to thank all speakers for the important contributions they made. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for their assistance and cooperation. I am enormously grateful to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management for its support and understanding. I know I was not the easiest person to handle over the past few days, and I will try make up for that in the next 12 months.

It was my honour to welcome a number of new leaders to the General Assembly for the first time and to hear them express their countries' positions and aspirations. The fact that at this session we heard the views of more than 100 Heads of State or Government and over 70 Deputy Prime Ministers or Ministers for Foreign Affairs is a clear indication that the United Nations remains, in the words of the Charter, a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. It also reaffirms once again the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

The overarching theme I chose for this year's session was "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". Over the past week, we have heard thoughtful and constructive interventions on that critical topic. That catalysed fruitful discourse in the plenary and at numerous side events, in turn stimulating many bilateral consultations.

Some speakers offered concrete proposals on how the mechanisms that are in place can be better utilized. Those included calls to increase support for United Nations peacekeeping efforts. A number of interventions recognized the growing role that the African Union, the European Union and other regional organizations are playing in United Nations missions. Many delegations introduced concepts or ideas to be incorporated into the overall efforts to revitalize the General Assembly.

Numerous addresses emphasized the fact that deep-seated structural causes often form the backdrop of the immediate political symptoms of disputes. They called for a more comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and resolution that would encompass in a truly holistic way both short-term and long-term measures.

A great many delegations congratulated the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan for having reached agreements on security issues, border demarcation and the normalization of economic relations, and urged them to resolve the outstanding issues.

We heard serious concerns expressed from the rostrum about the world's increasing geostrategic volatility and unpredictability. A great number of delegations emphasized the fundamental importance of respecting the basic tenets of international law, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States. Strong emphasis was placed on the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States as being the backbone of effective multilateralism.

Speaker after speaker reiterated their positions that establishing respect for the rule of law was essential to achieving lasting peace in the aftermath of conflicts. That would engender more effective protection of human rights and create the conditions leading to economic progress and development.

The general debate brought about a congruence of views on the fact that conflict prevention, durable peace and security and sustainable development can be achieved only through an integrated approach. Many delegations addressed the consequences of the world's economic crisis, linking them not only to the necessity of increasing poverty reduction campaigns, but also to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The emerging consensus is that efforts must be intensified in order to fulfil the MDGs over the next three years.

A great many speakers stressed the need to begin the swift implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, underlining the critical role that this session of the General Assembly has to play in moving the process forward. That includes setting out a list of sustainable development goals and proposing options on an effective financing strategy.

Improving various aspects of global economic governance was also one of the most widely addressed topics. The enhancement of South-South cooperation was strongly emphasized. In addition, the statements of many delegations reinforced the view that the General Assembly should play a more prominent role in discussions on this issue, underlining the importance of holding meetings in the plenary before and after important Group of 20 events. Concerns were also raised about inclusivity, accountability and transparency.

Numerous delegations raised the Palestinian statehood issue. There was resounding support for a two-State solution that would take into account the legitimate concerns of Israelis and Palestinians, including viability and security. Many speakers called for a resumption of negotiations that would lead to a comprehensive solution, underlining the importance for the international community to strengthen support for the peace process. Some called for the United Nations to play a more decisive role in that endeavour.

Many Member States stressed their support for democratic changes in a number of Arab countries. They also expressed deep concerns with the deteriorating security and human rights situation in Syria. There was unequivocal encouragement for the ongoing efforts of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

Considerable attention was also paid to the various aspects of the nuclear issue and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. A number of delegations stressed the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology by all Member States, while others emphasized adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the safeguards mandated by the International Atomic Energy Agency as overriding concerns. In that context, we heard forceful messages that the very survival of nations may be at stake.

Speakers also responded to what the Secretary-General called the perfect storm of vulnerability that is now sweeping across the Sahel. We heard their disquiet over the growing threat that terrorism, attempts at unilateral secession and transborder organized crime pose to regional stability and development efforts.

Terrorism in all its forms was strongly condemned. So were recent blasphemous insults to religious figures and beliefs, but so, too, was the ensuing violence, including the murder of the United States Ambassador to Libya a few weeks ago.

In opening the general debate, I highlighted the enhanced role I would like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to play in conflict prevention. The importance of strengthening dialogue and understanding among cultures and faiths was a recurrent theme in the speeches. The substandard state of religious freedom in parts of the world was also highlighted as a growing concern.

Member States expressed cautious optimism that Somalia was moving in a positive direction, after so many failed starts. There were calls for the United Nations to redouble its efforts to secure peace in that country, as well as in other parts of that continent, including the Great Lakes region. Moreover, considerable attention was devoted to Africa's development needs, with stress on the imperative to keep the topic high on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Many delegations raised human trafficking and the illicit trade in drugs and small arms as issues of particular concern. Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and other environmental challenges were also discussed.

Speaker after speaker underlined the importance of the ongoing efforts at revitalization of the General Assembly, as well as Security Council reform. Emphasis was placed on improving working methods, with several delegations stressing the need for greater transparency and cooperation with other bodies in the United Nations system as a critical issue. A number of delegations presented their views on improving the human rights treaty bodies system. Speakers also underscored the importance of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women. Other important matters were also raised, such as the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples and of persons with disabilities.

When I opened the debate, on 25 September, I called on Member States to have faith in our ability to come together in the full understanding of our common destiny, so that our Assembly would go down in history as an Assembly of peace. In reviewing the many statements that have been made, I have been struck by how much common ground exists on a wide range of issues. Obviously, significant differences of opinion remain to be overcome. Nevertheless, I believe there is room for optimism.

World leaders have given us strategic guidance on how to move forward in the implementation of the agenda of the sixty-seventh session. In the time ahead, I intend to continue consultations with Member States, the Main Committees and regional and informal groups on the proposed programme of work.

Let us now dedicate ourselves to the hard work ahead, which begins in earnest as early as tomorrow. Let us try to be more transparent and efficient in how we conduct our affairs, making the best use of our time and resources to advance common objectives. Let us engage with a readiness to compromise and try hard to strengthen trust in each other, and in so doing help to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the 193 States Members of the United Nations.

I believe that now we truly have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 8.35 p.m.

United Nations

A/67/PV.22

General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

22nd plenary meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić .... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 106 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/67/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report (A/67/1) to the General Assembly at its 6th plenary meeting, on 25 September.

Mr. Sea (Cambodia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Cambodia.

As global events over the course of the past decade have vividly demonstrated, the world we live in today is fundamentally different from the world that existed at the time of the founding of the United Nations 67 years ago. In the complex web of interdependence in our world today, a local crisis can — with what was once unthinkable speed — affect the hopes and aspirations of entire societies halfway around the globe. Such challenges, while daunting, present new opportunities to strengthen international dialogue and cooperation.

ASEAN is currently redoubling its efforts in regional integration via the establishment of an ASEAN community by 2015. Underlining those efforts is a firm commitment to the work and principles of the United Nations. As such, ASEAN seeks to strengthen coordination and cooperation on key global issues of common interest and concern.

In that spirit, ASEAN wishes to share with the General Assembly certain issues of importance. First, ASEAN attaches great importance to sustained economic growth. In the context of declining economic prospects and mounting global challenges, collective action at the regional and global levels is needed in order to produce an effective response. While ASEAN continues its efforts to establish an ASEAN economic community by 2015, economic integration with all its partners has been strengthened. Moreover, in an effort to stabilize the financial sector, ASEAN has worked closely with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to strengthen a regional financial safeguard mechanism — the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI) — with a recent doubling of CMI funds from $120 billion to $240 billion as a firewall against a liquidity crisis.

In the global context, ASEAN contributes to the Group of 20 (G-20) annually. At this year's G-20 Summit in Los Cabos, Mexico, Cambodia, acting as ASEAN's representative, reiterated the need to sustain economic stability and structural reform for growth and employment, and the urgency to improve and strengthen international financial architecture in an interconnected global economy.

Secondly, meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is one of the pillars of sustainable development. As the deadline nears, greater progress in achieving the MDGs is of paramount importance. As enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, reducing poverty

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and narrowing the development gap within ASEAN through mutual assistance and cooperation is a primary mandate of ASEAN. As such, ASEAN is in absolute concurrence with the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/67/1), in that we must not lose our momentum on reaching the MDGs by 2015.

To that end, ASEAN has been advancing its own efforts, as contained in its vision of an ASEAN sociocultural community. With the aim of facilitating closer intra- and intersectoral collaboration, ASEAN adopted a road map in August 2011 for the attainment of the MDGs. Since then, remarkable progress has been made by ASEAN member States, with some reaching their targeted goals. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in narrowing the development gap within the region.

We agree with the Secretary-General that disaster risk reduction is essential to sustainable development. Given the fact that Southeast Asia is prone to natural disasters, disaster management is one of our top priorities. We reiterate the importance of strengthening ASEAN's collective response towards disasters by strengthening the ASEAN disaster response mechanism, namely, its Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, and enhancing the role of ASEAN's Secretary General as Coordinator. Cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations is also strengthened through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management.

ASEAN welcomes efforts to define new paradigms for sustainable development and fully endorses the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the policy guidelines outlined in the outcome document, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex).

Thirdly, in order to preserve our planet for the next generation, immediate and concerted action to address the critical problem of climate change is vital. Small States in the Asia-Pacific and Caribbean regions remain threatened by rising sea levels, and developing nations dependent on agriculture face threats to their livelihoods as a result of the externalities of climate change.

In that context, it is regrettable that the international community remains divided on the most appropriate response. We call on the developed countries to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions in accordance with the United Nations principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is disappointing that many of the promises made by nations since Copenhagen 2009 have not been fulfilled in a timely manner.

Fourthly, ASEAN's commitment to regional and global peace remains high on our agenda. This year marked the forty-fifth anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. Within a single generation since its initial founding, the region has enjoyed sustained and durable peace and stability, which have been consolidated via initiatives such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

ASEAN firmly believes that peacekeeping remains the pre-eminent instrument for maintaining international peace and security. We would also like to reiterate, however, that peacekeeping operations must respect the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs. We are of the view that the cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations in the area of peacekeeping is of great importance. At present, around 5,000 police, military experts and troops from ASEAN member States have actively participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations, including in demining activities.

Fifthly, ASEAN continues to strongly support international disarmament efforts, including efforts toward achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important part in maintaining peace and security in our region. ASEAN has worked hard to facilitate the signing of the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and its related documents by the five nuclear-weapon States as early as possible.

Finally, ASEAN attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. Currently, ASEAN is in the process of finalizing the ASEAN human rights declaration for adoption at the twenty-first ASEAN Summit in November 2012, with the aim of establishing a regional framework for cooperation to fully realize human rights in the region.

While we move forward to consolidate regional integration and attain the MDGs by 2015, we remain firmly committed to working in tandem with the United Nations, and we support all efforts to reinforce and enhance ties between our respective organizations.

ASEAN warmly welcomes the strengthening of the relations between the two organizations since the adoption of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations in November 2011. In that context, ASEAN will submit to the General Assembly at the end of October the draft of a resolution on cooperation between ASEAN and United Nations, which reflects the improved relationship between the two organizations. ASEAN hopes that the draft resolution will receive strong support and co-sponsorship from all Member States as in the past.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): First of all, I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of your duties as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. Japan looks forward to your leadership during the current session as we deal with the global challenges that the General Assembly is mandated to discuss, as outlined in the Charter. We reaffirm our commitment to contributing to that work. I also would like to convey to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Japan's deep appreciation for his efforts in guiding the diverse activities of the United Nations and for his latest report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1).

The spirit of the United Nations Charter and the shared principles of the international community call upon us to settle international disputes in a peaceful manner based on international law. Japan is committed to those principles and is determined to protect peace, ensure the safety of its people and protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with international law. Japan reiterates its firm belief that any attempt to realize a certain ideology or claim by the unilateral use or threat of force is inconsistent with the United Nations Charter. In that connection, Japan will continue to work with the United Nations to strengthen the rule of law, including through efforts to facilitate the use of international courts and tribunals and by extending assistance to developing countries for the improvement of their legal systems and the development of their human resources.

Furthermore, it is our strong belief that the idea of the rule of law has a strong connection with the enhancement of human rights, which is one of three pillars of the United Nations. Japan will continue to actively contribute to efforts to strengthen our role in the promotion of human rights. Japan will again submit, with the European Union, a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to address the grave concerns of the international community there, including on the abductions issue.

Regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, which is one of the primary tasks of the United Nations, progress was made through the concerted efforts of the international community during the sixty-sixth session, in particular when looking at the situations concerning the Sudan and South Sudan, and in Somalia and Yemen. In that regard, Japan is fully committed to contributing to United Nations efforts by participating in peacekeeping operation missions and extending assistance of various kinds to the affected areas. Japan is currently sending an engineering unit with approximately 330 personnel to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and is operating a Self-Defence Force facility in the Republic of Djibouti, which is actively engaged in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia.

Japan welcomes the work undertaken by the United Nations in the field of peacebuilding through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Japan allocated an additional $12.5 million to the PBF last November. We believe that stronger emphasis must be placed on the linkages between peacekeeping and development operations. Japan remains committed to ensuring that peacebuilding dividends are felt on the ground through the work of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. In addition, we welcome the initiative by the Secretary-General to strengthen civilian capacities in post-conflict States, including through the launching of CapMatch, the online United Nations civilian capacities exchange, last month. Japan takes interest in that initiative and its trial.

The adoption of resolution 66/290 on human security by the General Assembly last month was a significant step towards addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people. Recognizing that the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights — are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, Japan will continue to further promote human security and seek specific ways to implement that principle on the ground.

To that end, the Government of Japan has announced a contribution of $10 million to the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. In addition, on the occasion of the fifth Tokyo International Conference on

African Development, to be held in Yokohama, Japan, in June next year, the Government of Japan will seek to discuss various measures that could be adopted and implemented by participating African States for their people and communities, with a view to strengthening human security.

Human security also applies when coping with natural disaster. In order to share the lessons learned from the great East Japan earthquake of March 2011 and to formulate a framework for the sake of future generations, Japan reiterates its intention to host the third World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015 and would like to substantiate our preparation for the Conference with the support of the General Assembly.

From the perspective of human rights, strengthening capacity-building and the empowerment of individuals and communities, especially women and young people, is also crucial in the context of human security. Bearing that in mind, Japan will also continue in various forums, including UN-Women and the Security Council, to address the challenges facing women in order to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. Furthermore, in the light of resolution 66/67 on volunteerism, which was adopted in 2011, Brazil and Japan have jointly submitted draft resolution A/C.3/67/L.8 on mainstreaming and promoting volunteerism for the next decade.

The transitions in the Middle East and North Africa have again highlighted the importance of democracy and the rule of law. Japan will continue to support democratization and reform efforts by all countries.

The continuous violence and suppression, as well as the serious violations of human rights, in Syria cannot be overlooked from the perspective of the rule of law. Japan strongly condemns such violence in Syria and fully supports the efforts by Mr. Brahimi, Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria. Japan also has extended humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria. Furthermore, Japan commends the leadership of the United Nations for the mediation and electoral support provided in Libya and the engagement for political transition in Yemen. Such assistance is vital for those countries in their efforts to achieve peaceful transitions based on rule of law.

With regard to the Middle East peace process, the United Nations must also play a proactive role there. Japan strongly hopes for the immediate resumption of direct negotiations between the parties and is committed to continuously contributing to the efforts by the international community to realize a two-State solution.

In its efforts to strengthen the rule of law in both the regional and global contexts, the United Nations needs to redouble its efforts aimed at suppressing the proliferation of arms that could fuel conflicts around the world. The threat posed by weapons of mass destruction continues to be one of the most pressing issues that the United Nations and its Member States need to tackle.

Japan has been playing a leading role in the adoption of the General Assembly resolutions that call for united action to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the nuclear and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea pose serious threats to the region, as well as to the entire international community. Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and its commitments under the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks of 2005.

With regard to Iran, Japan continues to cooperate with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006). Japan strongly believes that full implementation of the Security Council resolutions on sanctions is of critical importance, as it provides a solid basis for United Nations action to strengthen international peace and stability.

In order to strengthen the commitment of States Members of the United Nations to full implementation of the relevant resolutions, Japan has been holding a number of New York-based conferences since 2010, and we will continue to do so. We also need to establish the highest common standards to regulate the international trade in conventional arms, and in that connection, the creation of a strong arms trade treaty is one of the highest priorities. As we were unable to conclude negotiations on such a treaty at the previous session, Japan, as one of the original seven authors of the resolution on the arms trade treaty, will do its utmost to finalize our work at the earliest possible time during this session of the General Assembly.

Terrorism also remains a grave threat and challenge to peace, democracy, and freedom that requires a continuing and comprehensive effort by the international community. Japan has been extending assistance to Afghanistan and many other countries in order to address local conditions that may be conducive to the spread of terrorism. Together with its partners in the international community, Japan remains firmly committed to the eradication of safe havens for terrorists in order to ensure peace and security in the world.

Among the multitude of challenges confronting the United Nations, as presented in the report of the Secretary-General, foremost is the building of the foundations for sustainable development. In that context, accelerating worldwide efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a crucial task, and Japan is determined to contribute to that process and also to work toward the formulation of the next development framework. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda by the Secretary-General, in which former Prime Minister Naoto Kan is an active participant.

With a view to substantively contributing to the post-2015 discussions, including the High-level Panel, Japan has been leading an informal discussion forum, known as the post-MDGs contact group, since last year. As the chair of the contact group, Japan produced the summary of the chair's note and the framing questions as input to the Panel.

The issue of sustainable development, in particular the follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), is another major task that the United Nations must accomplish. Japan will actively participate in the follow-up process, including through discussions on the sustainable development goals. Japan is also committed to following up the Green Future Initiative, which the Government of Japan announced at Rio+20. In that regard, Japan will host the International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development next year.

The issue of climate change should not be put on the back burner. We must keep advancing concrete efforts to reduce greenhouse gases without waiting for the establishment of the future framework. It is also important that such efforts be made in effective and efficient ways, not only in each country but through international partnerships. In that regard, we proposed Japan's vision and actions towards low-carbon growth and a climate-resilient world at the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and have actively advanced regional and bilateral efforts alike.

Japan's efforts have included the first formulation within the Asia Low-Carbon Growth Partnership of a strategy to promote low-carbon growth and climate-resilient development in the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the new flexible market mechanism proposed by Japan.

Although Japan appreciates the General Assembly's complementary efforts concerning the grave situation in Syria, it is regrettable that the Security Council has continued to fail to unite and speak in one voice on the issue.

The malfunction in the Security Council reminds us that reform of the Council is long overdue and is one of the most urgent tasks that Member States should tackle with priority. Based on that belief, the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Four countries met in the margins of the opening of the current session of the General Assembly and reconfirmed their common vision for reform. In that context, Japan appreciates the concrete efforts made by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, during the sixty-sixth session and welcomes his recommendations contained in his letter dated 25 July. Japan calls for the drafting of a concise working document on the matter, and calls upon other Member States to be actively engaged in genuine text-based negotiations during this session with a view to the holding of a high-level meeting on Security Council reform.

Regarding administration and budgetary issues, that significant topic includes two important items, namely, the scale of assessments and human resources management, including the mobility framework. Both items will have great impact on the future of the Organization, and Japan will be actively and positively involved in the negotiations on those items. Japan expresses its appreciation for the Secretary-General's continued strong commitment to better management in the Secretariat, and we welcome his recent efforts to improve transparency in the area of management.

With regard to the regular budget, Japan will push for budgetary discipline and will carefully scrutinize potential additional requirements for the current budget. Furthermore, it is imperative for the Secretariat to consider the next biennium budget carefully, not by simply extending the 2012-2013 budget, but through a fresh look at the true needs of the Organization.

I will close my statement today by reaffirming Japan's firm commitment to the efforts of the Secretary-General in ensuring a common, effective and efficient United Nations.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report (A/67/1).

The successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) Conference and the adoption of its outcome document, "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), marked the launching of the era of sustainable development in the work of our Organization, which requires a more integrated approach so as to confront the global challenges that we are facing. In the coming era, interlinkages among the challenges facing us must be recognized, and economic, environmental and social aspects must be incorporated in dealing with those challenges, while avoiding separate paths towards the same objective.

In that context, integration and coherence are key words that should also apply to our working methods, including addressing the post-2015 development agenda, which should be fair, inclusive, sustainable and supportive of development efforts. While the rules for the future establishment of the working group on sustainable development were not among the topics addressed in the report of the Secretary-General, I take this opportunity to express concern about the delay in the establishment of that group.

In that regard, I would like to suggest considering the appointment of two facilitators — one from the developing countries and the other from the developed countries — and to convene the working group in an open format, until consensus is reached on its composition, so as to start substantive work at the earliest opportunity,. That is consistent with the spirit and letter of paragraph 248 of the Rio+20 outcome document, which provides for the launching of an intergovernmental process that is transparent, inclusive and open to all stakeholders and for the establishment of an open-ended working group for that purpose.

Egypt stresses the importance of accelerated progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. We view the mention in the report of the decrease, for the first time in many years, in the level of official development assistance as well as the rise of trade protectionism, with great concern. They may have potential negative consequences on the development efforts of developing countries.

Egypt reaffirms that any international response to climate change must enhance the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It must be in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention, in particular the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Egypt looks forward to a positive and effective outcome to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to take place in Doha, Qatar. We hope that it will succeed in achieving and agreeing a legally binding second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

We also look forward to United Nations efforts to help African countries to address their development goals. We call for providing adequate funding for peacebuilding programmes by intensifying cooperation with international and regional financial organizations. We also look forward to increasing the available resources of the Peacebuilding Fund.

The Syrian crisis is deteriorating after more than 18 months. With thousands of innocent civilians killed, it is evident that the Syrian people do not need further decisions or initiatives. What they really need is substantive improvement on the ground. That will not be possible unless an immediate cessation of violence is achieved. The Syrian regime bears the main responsibility for the violence. We believe that any plans to resolve the crisis should be based on starting the process of transition and political change immediately in order to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and provide the necessary guarantees for all factions of Syrian society.

The democratic transition in Egypt and the Arab world has proved that real democracy comes from the people, from their own priorities, from their aspirations to economic development and social justice, and from their cultural and religious specificities. It highlights the interrelated and interdependent relationship between political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. That is why it is extremely important to provide further support for United Nations efforts to promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

The starting point of any discussion on the responsibility to implement the concept of the responsibility to protect is to affirm that such responsibility lies mainly with the Member States. The role of the international community is to support Governments in carrying out that responsibility. We must continue discussions on the concept of responsibility to protect in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) and the General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 64/291. We should avoid politicization of the concept. We should also avoid using it as a pretext to interfere in domestic affairs.

Egypt welcomes the inclusion of youth issues among the priorities of the Secretary-General in his second term, as well as his emphasis on the comments made by the Egyptian President in his statement before the General Assembly (see A/67/PV.9) to consider the establishment of a United Nations body on youth in order to address the challenges facing young people and to respond to their aspirations in areas of education and employment. We also express our appreciation for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for its activities in Cairo and its commitment to promote women's political participation in the Arab States.

Corruption in all its forms is the most dangerous crime in all societies. It undermines security and stability. It destroys national economies. It is also closely linked to forms of organized crime. Egypt looks forward to identifying the contribution of the United Nations Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, established by the Secretary-General in 2011, in the fight against corruption and achieving development, especially in developing countries. We also look forward to effective international efforts to recover illegally acquired funds smuggled abroad from developing countries, and to establish a mechanism to trace those assets in all countries, banks and financial institutions.

I would like also to thank the Secretary-General for emphasizing the importance of implementing the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I wish to highlight the particular importance that Egypt attaches to the upcoming 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The outcome document of the 2010 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)) clearly mandated the Secretary-General and the three NPT depositary States to take the necessary measures to convene the conference, in consultation with the States of the region.

We reiterate that the achievement of the universality of the NPT remains the basis of the multilateral disarmament regime. I would like to emphasize here that the final document of the 2010 Review Conference cannot be compared to other documents emanating from other forums with limited participation and less authority.

Egypt agrees with the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the need to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It is also important to address the issue of the accumulation of stockpiles by producing States for purposes of export and profit. The arms trade treaty should achieve a balance between the interests of exporting and importing countries. It must also affirm the rights of States to self-defence and to acquire, export and import weapons within legal frameworks.

In conclusion, I express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his important report, and I assure you, Sir, of Egypt's readiness to work with you and with all other delegations to reach concrete results during this session in order to contribute to achieving our goals of peace, justice, development and universal human rights.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). We appreciate his continued efforts and those of his staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, to meet the expectations of the membership.

The global community today is facing unprecedented challenges to peace, security and development. Ranging from popular uprisings to political turmoil, from climate disaster to global financial crises, from human rights violations and deprivation to extremism or terrorism, the list of threats to humankind is ever-expanding. The times call for us to reaffirm our resolve and fight the challenges collectively and peacefully under the auspices of the United Nations.

The ideal of global peace and stability will remain an empty slogan without prosperity in the developing countries. The global economic downturn has, unfortunately, worn away years of development gains in many countries. Under those circumstances, the quest for poverty eradication and sustainable development becomes an uphill task. It thus appears that the realization of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 will not be possible for many developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs), without additional financing. Against that backdrop, the reported decline in official development assistance last year is indeed alarming.

In general, developing countries should have more say in international economic affairs. It is necessary to establish a rules-based and fair multilateral trade system and push towards multilateral trade negotiations grounded in the principles of mutual understanding and concession. It is also essential to review decision-making processes in the international financial system and ensure that developing countries have more weight in those processes.

Support for the least developed countries like Bangladesh must come in the form of granting market access, removing trade barriers, the fulfilment of overseas development assistance targets, more aid commitments, funding adaptation to climate change, and giving us equal voice in the Bretton Woods institutions and other international financial institutions. Commitments have been made by the international community to strengthen the economic stability of LDCs. It is now time for the development partners to implement the commitments made in Monterrey, Paris, Brussels and, most recently, Istanbul.

Migration for development is one of the largest inter-State economic activities of this century. The majority of the world's labour migrants are from the developing South. Their remittances alleviate poverty and contribute to development in both the sending and the receiving States. Although there is relatively free flow of capital, there is no free flow of labour. In that regard, Bangladesh continues to advocate in favour of implementation of Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services under the World Trade Organization.

Building the foundations of sustainable development is the greatest challenge we face today as an international community. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Conference (Rio+20), the international community renewed its commitment to sustainable development. In its outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex), Member States agreed to define universally applicable sustainable development goals. The work to develop the goals will begin soon. As agreed in Rio, that work will have to be closely associated and coordinated with the processes that will take up the development agenda beyond 2015. Priority must be given to the challenges of poverty, employment, food and energy, water, health and environmental sustainability. The Millennium Development Goals must be integrated into the new framework so that the unmet development priorities continue to be the main focus of the international community.

Climate change is having a serious impact on many countries and is even threatening their existence. Its impact is undermining the development efforts of many countries. It is high time that a global, comprehensive and ambitious agreement on climate change is reached. The agreement should include not only provisions on greenhouse-gas emissions based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and burden-sharing, but also the concerns of climate migrants, the transfer of green technologies and the funding of the Green Climate Fund, inter alia, for adaptation and mitigation purposes.

We support all efforts to mainstream the rule of law into the activities of the United Nations system. Whether it is for the maintenance of international peace and security or the promotion of development and protection of human rights, it is crucial to stick to and respect the rule of law. The countries that promote the rule of law internally must also respect the rule of law in international settings.

My delegation is deeply concerned over the stagnation of the multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. Progress in the nuclear field continues to be impeded in particular by the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to overcome its differences and agree on a programme of work that would allow for the resumption of substantive work. There is also need for meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence for reducing the imperative of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines.

Poor regulation of the global trade in arms continues to pose a significant threat to peace and security. It is therefore very disappointing that the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty failed to agree on the text of a treaty that would have set common standards for the international trade in conventional arms. It frustrates the hopes of the millions of people all over the world who bear the brunt of the negative consequences of conflict and violence fuelled by the unregulated arms trade.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, which are the vital cornerstones upon which the United Nations was created. The challenge before us is to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping is adequately financed and enabled to meet the realities of today. We strongly support continued partnership among the troop- and police-contributing countries, the General Assembly and the Security Council to make peacekeeping more effective. It is also essential to ensure that all stakeholders are closely involved with planning and managing peacekeeping operations.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund was an important development. The Peacebuilding Commission provides a much-needed forum in which all actors involved in peacebuilding can coordinate their efforts. The ongoing engagement of the PBC and the programmes funded by the Peacebuilding Fund have made critical contributions to fostering stability in post-conflict countries. We need to nurture those nascent structures in the greater interest of peace and stability in the world.

We need to make the United Nations and its work more relevant to the evolving international order. As such, we support the ongoing efforts to undertake necessary reform. The objective of the reform should be to strengthen the leading role of United Nations in international affairs, enhance its working efficiency and strengthen its capacity to deal with various threats and challenges.

My delegation attaches importance to the ongoing process of revitalizing the General Assembly. The primacy of the Assembly flows from the universality of its membership and the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. The General Assembly should be emboldened as the chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations.

United Nations reform will not be complete without meaningful Security Council reform. The Security Council needs to be reformed by expanding both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership in order to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century.

We attach great importance to the transparent, accountable and efficient management of the United Nations. We welcome and support efforts to transform the Secretariat into a more efficient and responsive body. In our view, a dynamic Secretariat, accountable to all its stakeholders, is needed to deliver quality results for the benefit of the wider membership.

Finally, it is our sincere hope that in this session the General Assembly will continue to move from commitments to action and that the United Nations will continue the process of transforming itself into an institution ready to meet the challenges of the day.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): Allow me first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). We share many of his assessments of the current world situation and the activities of the United Nations during the past year. The most important thing for us to do is ensure that the United Nations delivers. We must deliver to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals. We must deliver to bring peace to places of conflict. And we must deliver to promote human rights, rule of law and democracy.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Cambodia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The world is confronted by multifaceted, interlinked and simultaneous challenges. Only by working together will we find the effective avenues and capacity needed to address them. I wish to take this opportunity to share some thoughts on the report, as follows.

First, I note with pleasure the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which renewed the global commitment to mainstreaming a balanced approach in order to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. It is essential that we honour our commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference. While developed countries are expected to do more to help developing countries, the latter must also strive to do their utmost. When it comes to following up the Rio+20 outcome decisions, it is important that the international community work in a coordinated manner to scale up its efforts. The United Nations should therefore focus on ensuring that follow-up efforts to the Rio+20 outcomes are implemented.

Since their inception, the MDGs have lifted millions out of poverty and to a better standard of living. Yet progress has been uneven and unbalanced, and many countries are still not on track to meet the MDGs by 2015. We should therefore make it an urgent priority to greatly accelerate progress by providing those countries with the necessary support. And as the deadline to achieve the MDGs approaches, this is an appropriate time to begin a discussion that will lead to a robust, bold and ambitious agenda for development beyond 2015.

For developing countries, economic growth and eradicating poverty remain overriding priorities. We share others' concern that as the supply of fossil-fuel-based energy is depleted, we must seek more sustainable and efficient energy sources. Indonesia is making ongoing efforts to establish bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the promotion and development of renewable energy use. In that regard, the Secretary-General's initiative on sustainable energy for all could be used as a basis for formulating national policy on energy.

Concerning the issue of climate change, it is vital that the Doha Climate Change Conference, to be held at the end of this year, make significant progress towards saving the planet. The Conference should ensure that the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will be effectively implemented in order to create a foundation for stabilizing the global climate in future. While, in a spirit of common and differentiated responsibility, developed countries should take the lead in reducing emissions and developing countries should also make their best efforts, the world must come up with a cogent and comprehensive climate-change regime for the years following 2020.

It is estimated that this year global unemployment will reach 200 million, of whom 75 million are young people. In developing countries, where young people constitute the fastest-growing segment of the population, prolonged youth unemployment is damaging to inclusive, sustainable and equitable growth. In Indonesia's experience, it is important to encourage growth in sectors that can generate greater employment, and to invest intensively in sectors such as health and education. Cooperation in education, skills development and training, including internships, is very important. On-the-job training for young people that helps to support a successful transition from school to work should also be included.

Where United Nations peacekeeping operations are concerned, we must ensure that adequate equipment and resources, along with training, are available so that personnel are prepared for the complexity of their mandated tasks, particularly those relating to the protection of civilians. Indonesia has been an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions since 1957, and will continue to contribute troops and police to such missions. We are now the top troop-contributing country to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

We would like to emphasize the importance of enhanced transparency in the selection and appointment of strategic posts in United Nations peacekeeping operations, both in the field and at Headquarters, taking into account Member States' troop contributions. We also plan to broaden our participation by becoming a provider of global civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict. In that regard, we continue to support transparent dialogue among Member States and other relevant stakeholders, in keeping with the provisions of resolution 66/255 on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict.

Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are deeply concerned about the many threats we see to international peace and security. We are worried that the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the growing arms race are casting a shadow over the stability and security of the world. We must exercise our political will and capacity to act to overcome the continuing lack of progress and impasse that afflict our disarmament machinery. We must tackle the problems that are hindering progress on disarmament and non-proliferation firmly and in all seriousness. The impasse in the Conference on Disarmament is an obstacle to our attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons. It is vital that the Conference, as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament and non-proliferation, start its substantive work on the core issues of its agenda.

Indonesia welcomed the third biennial review in June of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and therefore also welcomes the full implementation of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy's four pillars. Indonesia has based its national response to the challenge of terrorism on those pillars for several years now, and we believe that they provide the kind of holistic framework necessary to ensure coordination and success.

At the regional level, Indonesia has participated in several initiatives focusing on various areas of counter-terrorism. Through ASEAN, we have a strong and highly coordinated approach involving various counter-terrorism programmes, as well as the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism. We believe that the Convention will fully supplement and support the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, especially in the area of human rights, and address the issue of conditions conducive to terrorism.

The promotion and protection of human rights is one of our Government's basic pillars. We continue to support the work of human rights institutions. In the light of this, we welcome the progress made by the United Nations during the year in review. We share the view that not only are these rights universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, but that development cannot take place if human rights are imperilled. Social advancement and stability can be guaranteed only if they are planted in the fertile soil of human rights. In that regard, we are pleased to be able to participate in United Nations efforts to strengthen and enhance the effective functioning of the human rights treaty system.

Indonesia is pleased that 2012 was designated the Year of Prevention. Without doubt, recent events in the Middle East and North Africa have underlined the importance of the concept of the responsibility to protect in guiding countries that have to deal with preventing and responding to such events.

Those providing humanitarian assistance should continue to uphold the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and respect for the sovereignty of the countries in question. All international humanitarian assistance should be organized around the principle that the countries affected have primary responsibility. It is therefore essential to strengthen the capacity and resources of national and local Governments to coordinate and deliver humanitarian assistance, including in disaster risk management and mitigation.

We welcome the continuing role of the Central Emergency Response Fund, which last year stood at $465 million. However, funding must continue to be sustainable and predictable, and accountability for the use of funds should be improved through greater transparency and evidence of results delivered, among other things. The work of the United Nations in promoting effectiveness and efficiency in disaster risk reduction should be enhanced through continuing dialogue and improved coordination with its partners at the global, regional, national and local levels. In New York in March, Indonesia, together with Australia, Peru and Norway, formed the Group of Friends for Disaster Risk Reduction as an open-ended informal mechanism aimed at discussing and promoting awareness of disaster risk reduction, including the post-2015 Hyogo Framework for Action.

Given the magnitude of the challenges confronting us, strengthened cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations are enormously important in helping us to address them. In that connection, we would like to emphasize that the adoption of the Joint Declaration on the Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations, at the fourth ASEAN-United Nations Summit in Bali in November 2011, showcases the concerted efforts of both organizations in teaming up to that end.

Indonesia appreciates the work of the Secretariat, particularly that of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, which has assumed the duty of organizing numerous ocean and law of the sea meetings. To that extent, we encourage stronger support to the Division to facilitate the provision of excellent service.

In the spirit of friendship and open dialogue, we will be able to move forward with the agenda before us at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. In that regard, you can count on the cooperation and support of my delegation.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic wishes to express its thanks to the Secretary-General for his presentation of the report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). We agree with the Secretary-General that the pillars of the Organization's work are becoming increasingly interrelated. In that sense, we welcome the efforts to improve the coordination of all activities, particularly the identification of the five areas in which cooperation with Member States will allow better execution of the mandates.

Sustainable development calls for integrating aspects of economic growth, social development and environmental protection. It also needs to be inclusive. The paradigm of sustainable development must be based on the fundamental principles that all States have accepted, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. That principle was reaffirmed last June at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. For my country, that principle has been an integral part of environmental negotiations for over two decades, and rightly so. The obligations of each country in economic, social and environmental areas worldwide must match its development, its specific circumstances and its different historical responsibilities for environmental deterioration.

Another fundamental principle in the context of the intersection of the three pillars of sustainable development is the full sovereignty of each country over its natural resources.

Argentina maintains that there is no single development model applicable to each and every nation. But we believe that growth must be accompanied by social inclusion and must permit the creation of decent work, which allows those who have the least to regain their dignity. We are not in favour of single models, neither our own nor those of others, when it comes to implementing each country's policies for sustainable development.

We are willing to work within the General Assembly in an inclusive and transparent fashion to move forward in the achievement of sustainable development goals. It is necessary for the process we launch to be strongly rooted in the principles that have guided us since 1992, to be invigorated by scientific and technological knowledge and advances, and, above all else, to have the means it requires for its implementation. We must also consider together how to make future sustainable development goals compatible with the Millennium Development Goals, adopted 12 years ago.

Turning to the idea of the green economy, Argentina will not accept any proposal that would result in green protectionism, nor will we accept the promotion of policies that constitute disguised restrictions on international trade or arbitrary and unjustifiable discrimination. We do not believe that the green economy should replace the paradigm of sustainable development. For that reason, it will only be possible to conceive of the green economy as another tool for sustainable development — a tool that includes the necessary means of implementation and that each country will be able to use in a sovereign fashion, taking into account its political needs and national priorities, as agreed in the outcome document "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex).

We agree with the Secretary-General that in recent years, conflicts have become more complex. The response of the United Nations must be appropriate to the circumstances. It must help prevent conflict through the various methods for peaceful settlement of disputes provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, using force only exceptionally and as a last resort. We welcome the decision of the President of the Assembly to devote the topic for this general debate and the theme for the current session to a concept which my country holds dear — the peaceful settlement of disputes. We reaffirm Argentina's unshakeable commitment to that concept. We will encourage other States to adopt similar positions.

We highlight the fundamental importance of respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, not only for development but to put an end to the violence that threatens international peace and security. We believe that it is right to include human rights policy in United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions. We are certain that this will contribute to the effective execution of the Organization's mandates and strengthen the link between peacekeeping operations and respect for those very important rights.

Argentina leads a worldwide campaign to promote and universalize the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Our country was the first in Latin America and the second in the world to ratify the Convention. We welcome the first session of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the signing in Geneva in February 2012 of the third Optional Protocol to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, which Argentina signed last July.

Argentina agrees with the Secretary-General in highlighting the important contribution of the International Criminal Court to the fight against impunity. The Court is the first permanent international criminal tribunal, and 2012 marks the tenth anniversary of its establishment. Also this year, the Court delivered its first decision, sentencing Thomas Lubanga for recruiting children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We emphasize the importance of addressing at the United Nations the issue of the financing of referrals made by the Security Council to the Court. We also stress the importance of cooperation by all States, both parties and non-parties to the Rome Statute, with the Court, especially with regard to arrest warrants.

For more than a decade, there has been international acknowledgement of the need for multilaterally negotiated standards that introduce predictability in the transfers of conventional weapons and that require those exchanges to be carried out in accordance with the principles of international law. Such a need stems from various reasons, among which we underscore the unlawful use of arms, given the norms of international humanitarian and human rights law, and the risk of their diversion to terrorist or criminal groups. In that regard, Argentina believes that it is important to complete the work of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible and to adopt a treaty within the framework of the United Nations.

With regard to strengthening the Organization, Argentina supports all measures to improve its administrative management as long as they come under the mechanisms provided for in the budget and are strategic and in line with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Likewise, regarding the management of human resources, we will closely consider the Secretariat's proposals, taking into account the importance of adequately protecting the rights of staff and their contractual position. With respect to those issues, we believe that close consultation among Member States is key to the success of any reform process.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus notes the businesslike and constructive nature of the Secretary-General's report (A/67/1). We share the view of the Secretary-General that the main task facing us as the international community is to lay the foundations for sustainable development.

Belarus reaffirms its commitment to the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and is ready to contribute to multilateral efforts to implement those decisions. First and foremost, that applies to issues such as drawing up sustainable development objectives, strengthening the Economic and Social Council, technology transfers and technical cooperation in various fields, including energy.

It is important not to reverse the sustainable development achievements made to date because of the global economic crisis. On the post-2015 development agenda, we must provide for steps that will make the achievements of Member States in various development fields irreversible. Cooperation and development must be built on full compliance with the principle of respect for the interests of all Member States. Only in that way will the international community be able to achieve a prosperous world that is free of poverty, disease, anachronistic protectionist measures and unilateral economic sanctions.

We believe that the United Nations is not making sufficient use of factors conducive to promoting a global economic recovery. In that context, we draw attention to middle-income countries as one such element. Planned and targeted assistance to such countries will increase the number of donor States and will clearly show least developed countries the possibilities for multilateral cooperation once they have achieved a new level of development.

We place particular hope in the upcoming four-yearly comprehensive policy review of operational development activities within the United Nations system. In our opinion, that review must lead to a system of targeted measures seeking to ensure sustainable development for all States that receive United Nations assistance.

We are concerned about the decreasing share of resources for the programme activities of United Nations operational bodies. That has a negative impact on the predictability and coordination of their work. In that regard, we believe that the efforts of the United Nations system to stabilize financing for development must be stepped up by increasing the number of donors and public-private partnerships.

The United Nations role in ensuring sustainable development cannot overlook supporting young people. That will help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations in establishing and implementing projects to support young people, in particular the most vulnerable groups. In that respect, Belarus welcomes the Secretary-General's new global initiative on education so as to invest in the next generation. We also call for the support of talented young people to be more actively included in United Nations programmes in order to help educate a new kind of future leader and manager. We are impressed by the Secretary-General's drive to introduce a new system of talent management in the Secretariat.

The links between development and the maintenance of peace and security are clear. Belarus shares the report's concern about the lack of progress on resolving disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

We support the rapid launch of substantive work by the Conference on Disarmament. Its progress will depend on the political will of a group of leading States and of the five nuclear Powers. Belarus supports the drafting of a new international instrument to resolve issues related to the uncontrolled proliferation of conventional arms.

We share the concerns of the Secretary-General over the failure of negotiations at the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty. Continued negotiations as part of the arms trade treaty should serve as an additional catalyst for the efforts of the international community to solve the urgent issue of the proliferation of conventional arms.

Belarus underscores the importance of the rule of law as the key to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, conflict settlement and the maintenance of peace and security. The recent High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on that issue and its outcome document (resolution 67/1) are very significant. We believe that any initiative concerning conflict prevention and the prevention of loss of human lives that is submitted for consideration must ensure strict compliance with the principles of the rule of law. We underscore the need for all States to agree on the modalities for such initiatives before their practical implementation.

Belarus supports continued effective cooperation on combating terrorism at all levels within the United Nations system. We underscore the importance of strengthening the legal framework for countering terrorism and of establishing an effective and non-selective system for the provision of technical assistance for State capacity-building and to help States meet their commitments.

Belarus values the Secretary-General's commitment to combating violence against women and children, including victims of human trafficking. We note with satisfaction that the United Nations plays an increasingly visible role in the global fight against human trafficking and that it promotes the forging of constructive dialogue and cooperation among Member States, the United Nations system, agencies and international organizations in order to counter that modern form of slavery. We urge support for the initiative of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking on the convening of a high-level meeting of the General Assembly in 2013 to assess the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (resolution 64/293).

The reform of the Organization is more urgent than ever. Without it, we will not have an effective toolkit for the prevention of global crises. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to provide valuable assistance to Member States in their efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, to strengthen and enhance the transparency of the Security Council and to expand its membership, and to reform and strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council. We believe that the reform of the Organization's principal organs should be coordinated and comprehensive. That will ensure the harmony and effectiveness of the United Nations system.

The Secretary-General rightly notes in his report that the success of our common efforts to uphold the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter depends on our ability to implement a meaningful agenda. Belarus hopes that a constructive spirit, marked by respect for the positions of States and their approaches to resolving current issues, will prevail at this General Assembly session. We trust that such a spirit will enable us to find effective responses to today's threats and challenges.

Mr. Nuñez Mosquera (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). The issues addressed by the Secretary-General in his report are multiple and essential.

Cuba attaches great importance to the future establishment of the post-2015 development agenda. That process should be distinguished by its deeply intergovernmental, transparent and inclusive nature, under the auspices of the General Assembly. The process should critically analyse the reasons for the failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to establish a development agenda that responds to the needs and strategies of the countries of the South that are the beneficiaries of international cooperation.

Initiatives to improve the functioning of the United Nations system for development, both at Headquarters and in the field, should be based on agreement among Member States and be accountable to them. Similarly, they should respect the nature and functions of each institution and ensure the alignment of their activities with the national priorities and strategies for development of each country.

We must be very cautious when participating in or following up on exclusionary agendas and processes that have not been agreed upon in the framework of the

United Nations but that nevertheless affect the central role of the United Nations and the General Assembly in taking the most important international decisions.

Furthermore, we wish to draw the Assembly's attention to the plethora of initiatives that have been presented as intended to reform the United Nations but that have had unsatisfactory results or simply have not produced any essential change. Before continuing to make new proposals for change and reform, the current processes must come to a close and their impact must be assessed. In that context, we welcome the reorientation of the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja) after the institutional crisis that almost paralysed the costly update of the Organization's information technology resources. We hope that the new management of the project will bring it to a successful conclusion. Also, we must hope that the conclusion of ongoing construction projects, such as the Capital Master Plan, will come to an end before we start new ones.

We welcome the dialogue of the Secretariat with Member States, which is essential in addressing the reforms and administrative and budgetary processes of the Organization. In that context, the accountability of the Secretariat at all levels is of great importance. Resolution 66/257 is clear about the requirements to renew accountability by the Secretariat. We have expressed our concerns at some reports made by the Group of 77 and China, which indicate what appear to be duplications of functions.

Allow me to highlight the launch of the intergovernmental process to strengthen and improve the effective functioning of the system of human rights treaty bodies, which occurred at the last session of the General Assembly. We have supported the process since its inception. A few weeks ago, it concluded its first cycle of consultations, and negotiations will continue throughout the current session.

With regard to human rights, we are concerned over the ongoing imbalance in the way they are dealt with within the United Nations system. Economic, social and cultural rights continue to be sidelined. Furthermore, we deplore the increasingly extended exploitation of the issue of human rights in the Human Rights Council and other settings of the United Nations to politicize, cherry-pick and manipulate opinion against certain developing countries, while systematic violations of human rights that take place in other countries, in particular developed countries, are ignored.

In the same vein, the incursion by the Security Council into issues that are clearly within the jurisdiction of other bodies of the United Nations system is also of concern, especially their increasing linkage to human rights issues mandated to the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee. Concepts such as the responsibility to protect, human security and preventive diplomacy, inter alia, which are not clearly defined or intergovernmentally agreed, cannot be used as a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of States, the violation of their sovereignty, military invasion or to promote regime change from the outside.

With regard to regional arrangements, we believe that their role should be in full accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. They cannot substitute for the role of the Organization, or ignore the strict application of the basic principles of peacekeeping operations. The main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security lies within the United Nations. The General Assembly has the primary responsibility for formulating and assessing concepts and policies on peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we believe that any directive or doctrinal document drawn up by the Secretariat that has an impact on the way in which Member States participate in peacekeeping operations should be previously agreed upon through a process of intergovernmental negotiating.

The interaction of host countries of peacekeeping operations with the troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the Security Council must continue to be strengthened. Host countries and the troop-contributing countries, in most cases, are not guaranteed truly active participation in all stages of the decision-making process for peacekeeping operations. We also believe that there should be broader coordination between the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Fifth Committee.

One of the major challenges that we continue to face is that of reforming the United Nations so that it can continue to serve the interests of all nations on an equal footing. We cannot allow reform to turn our Organization into an instrument which acts in the interests and on the whims of a few rich and powerful countries. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba indicated at the recently concluded general debate,

> "it is urgent to save the United Nations and subject it to deep-seated reform, so as to put it at the service of all, equally sovereign States and free it from the

> arbitrariness and double standards of a handful of industrialized and powerful countries.
>
> "International law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be resolutely enforced; the key role of the General Assembly should be restored; and a democratic, transparent and truly representative Security Council should be relaunched" (*A/67/PV.19, p. 10*).

We cannot speak of the true reform of the Organization as long as there is no real reform of the Security Council. This year showed that the process of intergovernmental negotiations for the reform of the Council is at a stalemate. We urgently need a truly equitable and representative Security Council that acts on behalf of all and within its mandate under the Charter, without usurping, as it does with increasing frequency, the functions and prerogatives of other bodies of the system.

There are still more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in the world, and more than 7,000 of them are ready for immediate deployment — and they are far more powerful than those that wreaked terror and death on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Completely banning and eliminating all nuclear weapons continues to be an urgent unfulfilled duty.

Those are some of the elements that we wanted to to raise in connection with the item before us. We will expand on our ideas in discussions in the Committees.

Serious challenges lie ahead of us. The world needs the United Nations and unified action on our part more than ever. Cuba will continue to work tirelessly for a better world for everyone.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): As we start our work for this session, we are guided by our leaders who, in the general debate, shared their perspectives on the global challenges that we face, the opportunities that we must seize and the collective action that we must mobilize for our common good, peace and prosperity. They clearly reaffirmed and acknowledged that the United Nations was the key to the success of that endeavour.

The central role of the United Nations is evident from the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). We thank the Secretary-General for his report, which provides a useful overview of the range of activities of the United Nations in the three pillars of work — peace and security, development and human rights.

The United Nations has indeed a demanding agenda. I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the energy and strong leadership that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has brought to our work. We support his efforts to adjust and realign the Organization's structures to enable it to effectively tackle the contemporary threats and challenges. We also commend his commitment to building bridges and bringing the membership together in the pursuit of our shared goals and objectives.

Pakistan supports the activities of the United Nations. We have contributed to the collective efforts of the United Nations constructively and consistently. I assure the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General that Pakistan will always be in the forefront of support for the United Nations.

Faltering economic growth is leading to growing unemployment across the globe. The sovereign debt crisis runs the risk of spreading to other economies. The United Nations system must come together in forging a response to the ongoing economic crisis. It is not enough to seek solutions in exclusive gatherings. We need an inclusive United Nations development agenda that is in sync with the imperatives of poverty eradication, green economic growth and sustainable development. That should remain an overarching priority.

We are pleased to note the thrust of the report on progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, that progress has been uneven. As we move towards 2015 and beyond, it is critical for the United Nations system as a whole to keep in mind the lessons learned from the implementation of the MDGs. We also need to ensure that new processes, including the elaboration of the sustainable development goals, will build on the MDGs.

Pakistan remains committed to accelerating progress on achieving the MDGs. We would like the United Nations system to help Pakistan navigate through its own challenges. To that end, we would also invite the high-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda to undertake a special review of the circumstances that countries like my own are facing in achieving the MDGs.

Pakistan supports the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative. We would, in fact, like to benefit from the initiative and to work with the Secretary-General's Office and Mr. Kandeh

Yumkella of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to develop a plan of action for Pakistan.

Pakistan welcomes the agreement reached at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex). Notwithstanding the difficulties, we succeeded in laying a solid basis for achieving "The future we want". As the Secretary-General's report correctly points out, the international community must deal with that challenge head-on, particularly when it comes to arresting and halting the negative trends in climate change. Even though Pakistan is closely engaged in negotiating the future legal framework by 2015, we do not think that efforts at addressing climate change must come to a halt until the time we manage to reach that agreement. Such an approach, as apparently suggested by some major polluters, would be disastrous for vulnerable developing countries.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the Organization will not be able to meet the demands and expectations in regard to the maintenance of international peace and security without the necessary resources and equitable global burden sharing. Over the years, Pakistan has provided concrete support for the work of the United Nations and for achieving success on international peace and security as a leading contributor of personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions, particularly in Africa.

Currently, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council serving for the seventh time, Pakistan will continue to play its constructive role in consolidating the successes achieved in many situations and addressing the challenges that remain in so many others. We are particularly conscious of the urgency of the situations in Syria and Mali.

We take this opportunity to call for a renewed political commitment to United Nations peacekeeping and for the provision of adequate and timely resources. The long-overdue issue of troop-cost reimbursement must also be updated as a matter of priority. I should also emphasize that the adjustment of the size and mandates of missions must be done carefully and correspond to the specific requirements and trajectories in different situations. We must also utilize the true potential of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We appreciate the continued involvement and oversight of the United Nations in Jammu and Kashmir through its peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. We believe that the peaceful settlement of long-standing disputes, as those of Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir, will help promote international peace and stability and enhance the prestige and sanctity of the United Nations.

Pakistan has an unwavering commitment to Africa. From our support to the continent's struggle for decolonization, to our cooperation and assistance in capacity-building, to our participation in peacekeeping, we have all along stood with Africa. We commend Africa's own leadership and initiatives in addressing its challenges and will continue to support all international efforts for peace and development on the continent.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes, which must be pursued in tandem while respecting the right to equal security for all States. In seeking ways to overcome the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the underlying security concerns of all States. Pakistan will continue to support the international community's efforts geared towards nuclear safety and nuclear security. We reiterate our call for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to craft a new consensus on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and machinery.

Pakistan is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. More than ever before, it has become essential to avoid selectivity and to genuinely promote all human rights — civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

We appreciate the coordination role played by the United Nations in humanitarian assistance, of which Pakistan itself has been a major beneficiary. We take note of the launch of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Transformative Agenda, which tackles the challenges and lessons learned from the humanitarian responses to Haiti and Pakistan. An inclusive and consultative approach remains critical for effective humanitarian work.

We are cognizant of the increasing threat to peace and security posed by organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. The funding and fuelling of terrorism through illicit drug trafficking has emerged as a major problem. Pakistan will hold a regional conference later this year to develop a unified approach to stamp out the drug trade.

International counter-terrorism efforts will require continued cooperation and coordination among Member States. At the same time, the role of the United Nations will remain crucial and it will need to be adequately prepared for the challenge.

Our objective of international harmony will be best served by promoting understanding among religions and civilizations. The recent deliberate incidents of defamation of Islam and our Prophet — peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him — remind us of the need to discourage and combat such acts. We appreciate the Secretary-General's forthright stance on those incidents. As President Zardari said in this address to the General Assembly:

> "Although we can never condone violence, the international community must not remain a silent observer and should criminalize such acts, which destroy the peace of the world and endanger global security by abusing the freedom of expression. Pakistan asks that the United Nations immediately address this matter of great alarm and concern and bridge the widening rift in order to enable the comity of nations to be one again." (*A/67/PV.7, p. 23*)

The common good lies in pursuing policies and actions that will make us all stakeholders in each other's futures. Cooperation, not confrontation, is the answer to the many problems that we face.

The United Nations is the best mechanism to promote cooperative multilateralism. It is in our collective interest to adapt, equip, reform and strengthen the United Nations to play its role effectively. We remain committed to achieving this objective with the support and consensus of all Member States.

Mr. Ahamed (India): I am privileged to address the General Assembly today. Allow me to begin by congratulating Mr. Vuk Jeremić on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

The annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/67/1) covers the wide spectrum of issues that inform the activities of the United Nations. It underscores the global and interdependent nature of the challenges we face. It shines a spotlight on the unfinished agenda of development and reform. It points to the turbulent times we live in. It reinforces our conviction that the need of the hour is genuine multilateralism.

The sociopolitical upheaval in West Asia and North Africa since last year has unleashed profound change and transition with which the region is still coming to terms. India is very concerned at the escalating situation in Syria. We support United Nations efforts to find a solution to the crisis through dialogue and an inclusive, Syrian-led political process.

It is a matter of regret that the question of Palestine remains unresolved, and we support the Palestinians' request for enhanced status at the United Nations. India firmly supports the aspirations of the Palestinian people to achieve a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders side by side and at peace with Israel.

Even as we approach the 2015 finish line for the Millennium Development Goals, there is already haste to look to the post-2015 agenda. The quest for poverty eradication and sustainable development remains as salient as ever. Significant roadblocks still stand in the way of food and energy security, health and education for much of the developing world. Countries are only tentatively emerging from the shadow of the worst economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression. The magnitude of the challenge is driven home by the fact that more than a billion people worldwide continue to languish in extreme poverty and hunger.

One thing is abundantly clear — unmet development priorities must be well integrated into the post-2015 framework. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development handed us a robust agenda on sustainable development. We must now train our energies on the best way to implement it in an intergovernmental setting. As we embark on a process of framing sustainable development goals, crucial issues — such as that of resource mobilization, be it through official development assistance, technology transfer, trade or foreign direct investment — must find appropriate priority and be enshrined in the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity.

On climate change, India will work with others to design a comprehensive, equitable and balanced outcome at the upcoming eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Doha, Qatar. We ourselves are currently hosting the eleventh Conference of Parties to the Convention on

Biological Diversity. Our expectation is that all parties will work for a strong development-oriented outcome and for the early implementation of the Nagoya Protocol to ensure the equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity.

In so far as our development partnership initiatives go, we are resolved to carry forward and expand our multifaceted and vibrant cooperation with Africa, including through the framework of the India-Africa Forum Summit. Similarly, we will continue to build on our commitments for enhanced cooperation with least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, within the rubric of South-South cooperation.

The international community has long acknowledged the ever-present and pervasive threat posed by terrorism. No country, city or region is immune from this global scourge. And yet, regrettably, we have failed by continuing to procrastinate in concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. It is high time that Member States summoned the necessary political will to agree on such a convention as a sound legal framework for the fight against terrorism. We need concerted global action. Such action should be predicated on zero tolerance towards terrorism and aimed at systematically dismantling its infrastructure.

India has a proud and time-tested association with United Nations peacekeeping dating back to its very inception. We have contributed over 130,000 personnel so far to this flagship endeavour of the United Nations. As peacekeeping moves forward, we must remain mindful of the challenges of operating in increasingly complex environments. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that complex mandates are matched by adequate resources so as to get the job done safely and effectively. In this process, it is of the utmost importance that there be real, effective and continuous consultation with troop-contributing countries in framing and implementing mandates.

It is also not lost on us that, if it is to be enduringly successful, peacekeeping must be seamlessly dovetailed with peacebuilding efforts. The United Nations needs to pay better attention to evolving a cogent and coherent peacebuilding framework that takes into account the capacities at hand and the complexities on the ground.

I should like to make one final remark regarding the Secretary-General's internal reform efforts. We have taken note of the initiatives to modernize and reform the Secretariat, including through large-scale business transformation projects such as the new enterprise resource planning system, Umoja; the International Public Sector Accounting Standards; and the Capital Master Plan. While each involves considerable investment, we see them as important drivers in modernizing the United Nations.

Nevertheless, it is our deep-rooted conviction that the relevance of the United Nations ultimately hinges on more fundamental reform of its governance architecture, which is frozen in another era that perpetuates the rights of the haves of the mid-1940s. It is only through such governance reform that the United Nations can truly invigorate action on issues of pressing global concern, be they peace and security, climate change, development or all human rights.

Let me therefore conclude by raising something that inexplicably is not mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. That is the important issue of Security Council reform, on which intergovernmental negotiations have seen much movement and a clear affirmation by an overwhelming majority of the Member States for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We regard the omission of the progress made in the intergovernmental negotiations on the issue as a significant drawback of the Secretary-General's report. We hope to see it corrected in future reports.

In terms of the process itself, India looks forward to capitalizing on the momentum generated so far to see real, fruitful and productive negotiations in the current session of the General Assembly on that important reform.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1).

Today, the world is undergoing important and profound changes. Multipolarity, economic globalization and the spread of information technology in society are all developing in depth. All countries are interconnected and more interdependent than ever before. Peace, development and cooperation are the general wishes shared and pursued tirelessly by the peoples of all countries. At the same time, the deep impact of international economic and financial crises are far from over. The recovery of the world economy faces risks, which calls into question the on-time realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The international security situation is complex. Regional hotspot issues keep on emerging here and there. Turbulence in West Asia and North Africa persists. The prospect for nuclear non-proliferation remains grim. Both traditional and non-traditional security problems are interwoven.

In the past year, in the face of multifaceted threats and challenges, the United Nations has been actively promoting multilateral cooperation and has played an important role in promoting economic growth and sustainable development, safeguarding international peace and security, promoting and protecting human rights, coordinating international humanitarian assistance, combating terrorism, and promoting disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The next five-year programme of action proposed by the Secretary-General has also made initial progress. I would like to take the opportunity to express our appreciation for his diligent work in the past year.

It is necessary for the United Nations to continue to play a coordinating role in development. As economic globalization is deepening, the interests of Member States are further integrated. We need to expand areas of cooperation and improve the mechanisms for that purpose in the interest of a balanced, generally beneficial and win-win development of economic globalization. We need to further promote the development of developing countries and narrow the gap between North and South so that the benefit of development can be shared by all peoples in the world.

At present, we need to earnestly implement the outcome and consensus reached at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and promote progress in international cooperation for sustainable development. To actively implement the MDGs, the United Nations needs to explore the formulation of a post-2015 international development agenda. The Organization should take development and the eradication of poverty as its core objectives and engage in open, transparent and democratic intergovernmental consultations. It should also allow civil society, the private sector and others to play an active role.

To effectively respond to complex and varied security threats and challenges, it is necessary to fully explore the core role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. In international relations, Member States should continue to steadfastly adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international relations. State sovereignty and territorial integrity cannot be violated, and the post-Second World War international order cannot be challenged.

Member States also need to respect the solemn principles of equality and non-interference in internal affairs and should espect countries' rights to autonomously choose their social systems and approaches to development. The United Nations should advocate and promote a culture of peace and support the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, including through dialogue and negotiations.

Terrorism is a common thread facing the international community. China opposes all forms of terrorism. In fighting terrorism, it is necessary to renounce double standards. It is a noble goal to protect human rights and to protect innocent civilians from harm, but no State may forcibly pursue change in the name of humanitarian intervention. We should respect diversity in the world. The international community should further advocate dialogue, exchanges, mutual respect and equal coexistence among different civilizations and religions.

In the face of those new developments, it is the general expectation of the international community that the United Nations should play a greater role in maintaining world peace, promoting common development and strengthening international cooperation. China supports the Organization's efforts to carry out necessary and sound reforms so as to improve its authority and efficiency and to better perform the mandates entrusted to it by the Charter. United Nations reforms should give developing countries a greater say in international affairs and help the Organization play a bigger role in coordinating international efforts to respond to the new global threats and challenges. It is necessary to proceed in a balanced way with reforms in areas of security, development and human rights. It is especially necessary to promote positive results in the area of development and to provide necessary safeguards for development in terms of mechanisms and resources.

China has always advocated, supported and practised multilateralism and has supported the core role of the United Nations in international affairs. China will continue to actively participate in all areas of United Nations work, to safeguard the authority of the United Nations and to firmly support the purposes and principles of the Charter, ensuring that in its work the Organization pays greater attention to the interests of developing countries so that it can make an even greater contribution to building lasting peace, common prosperity and world harmony.

Mr. Dos Santos (Brazil): I wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). It describes the activities of the United Nations during a period in which the world's demands on and expectations of the United Nations remain very high.

In facing today's most pressing global challenges, strengthening multilateralism must be at the forefront of our plans and actions. We must all endeavour to revitalize the work of the General Assembly through concrete initiatives. The Security Council must be reformed and expanded to reflect the current political realities and to allow for greater participation by developing countries, including as permanent members. Allow me make a few comments on specific issues.

As we approach 2015, we must accelerate our efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The international community must make good on its commitments on the transfer of technology and the sharing of good practices, knowledge and experience, and on support for national capacity-building, especially for countries that are lagging behind.

At the same time, we must start work on the post-2015 development agenda. We are confident that the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons will provide an important input for Member States to deepen and broaden the set of development goals in a manner that reflects the most pressing challenges faced by the international community and that helps to build the strong international partnership and cooperation framework and the financial and political support needed to achieve those goals.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was a crucial milestone on the road towards sustainable development. The agreement that we reached in Rio reinforced multilateralism. I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Secretary-General and all United Nations staff for their unwavering support and for their close collaboration, which made Rio+20 the largest and most inclusive conference in the history of the United Nations.

The outcome of Rio+20 (resolution 66/288, annex) reaffirmed our collective commitment to sustainable development and launched a series of essential processes to make that goal a reality. The development of sustainable development goals will require our cooperative efforts. The goals must be consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and must allow for flexibility in order to accommodate the specificities and priorities of developing countries.

Equally important are the mandates for the establishment of the high-level political forum, the intergovernmental process on options for an effective strategy for financing sustainable development, and the facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies. We must pursue them in earnest.

With regard to peace and security, political instability and emerging conflicts continue to pose a serious threat to regional and international security in many parts of the world. United Nations peacekeeping operations continue to be one of the most crucial aspects of the Organization's work for millions of people around the world. We strongly support the continued partnership among the troop- and police-contributing countries, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat to make peacekeeping more effective. Progress must be achieved in bringing peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities together, in improving the interaction of United Nations missions with the local population and in enhancing the protection of civilians. One challenge of particular importance today is how to address the complex problems of security and development in ways that are distinct yet mutually reinforcing.

With regard to the development of Africa, the continent remains a key priority of the Organization's work. Brazil continues to be an engaged partner of African countries in their endeavour to maintain peace, to protect human rights, to promote economic growth and to achieve sustainable development. We are following with great interest the increasing collaboration between the United Nations and African institutions, such as the African Union and regional organizations. We are also confident that the Organization can play a decisive role in advocating for enhanced cooperation with the African continent in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Human rights is a basic pillar of the United Nations and a central part of its work. Brazil's commitment to the promotion of the rights of the human person is unwavering. The United Nations must strive to operate in a non-selective and constructive manner, while maintaining the capacity to address situations of particular concern.

With regard to the responsibility to protect, we emphasize the importance of prevention. Whenever forceful collective action is contemplated, after exhausting all non-coercive measures, there is a need to promote responsibility while protecting as a necessary complement to the responsibility to protect.

Regarding strengthening the Organization, Brazil supports efforts to make the United Nations more effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of Member States. In that regard, we look forward to the consideration by the Fifth Committee of the Secretary-General's proposals in the areas of administrative reform and change management. We welcome a process of transparent and open communication between Member States and the Secretariat. That is key to ensuring successful reforms. We also highlight the importance of improving the transparency of the budgetary process, particularly with regard to voluntary contributions.

The Secretary-General has stated that human resources management, in particular mobility, is a priority for the Organization. We agree with him. It is essential that the Organization have access to a talented, multi-skilled, motivated and diverse workforce. In that regard, Brazil will engage constructively in the discussions on the Secretary-General's proposals for mobility, with due regard for the need for equitable geographic representation in the Secretariat.

Brazil will continue to be actively and constructively engaged in the work of the Organization.

Ms. Dibaco (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me to express once again my delegation's congratulations to Mr. Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

My delegation also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1). The report describes the progress that the Organization has made over the past year on the eight long-term global priorities identified by Member States. As illustrated in the report, the global political, economic and social situation is moving faster and requires a rapid response. The problems that we face today are simply too complex to be solved by Governments alone. They require collective, coordinated, enhanced cooperation and a more participatory decision-making process. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's plan to develop a comprehensive proposal that seeks to harness the power of partnership.

First, on the issue of peacekeeping, we strongly support intensified strengthening of United Nations strategic and operational collaboration with regional organizations such as the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Economic Community of West African States with respect to peacekeeping operations. In that regard, I wish to reaffirm Ethiopia's commitment, as the largest African troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping efforts, to continue working together with the United Nations and the African Union to realize peace and security in Africa and elsewhere.

Secondly, we commend the Secretary-General's continued commitment to Africa. Despite the considerable progress achieved in the past 10 years, Africa continues to face significant challenges in the area of peace and security, as well as socioeconomic development. Hence, there is a need for concerted action by the international community to contribute towards alleviating the development challenges of Africa. Obviously, Africa has been negatively affected by the global economic situation. No part of the world is immune to the consequences of the global economic downturn, and for obvious reasons, the least developed countries, the majority of whom are African, are affected.

Despite those factors, we have made much progress in the past decades. We are on track on many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In fact, our achievements regarding Goal 1, on poverty alleviation, Goal 2, on universal primary education, and Goal 3, on gender equality and women's empowerment, are encouraging. During the three years remaining to achieve the MDGs, Ethiopia will continue its commitment to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by continuing to improve the productivity and output of smallholder agriculture and to enhance the income of the rural population. Ethiopia's resource allocation has been guided by the Government's pro-poor growth policy, whereby the lion's share of available resources is allocated for spending on the poor. In 2011, the share of pro-poor spending stood above 13 per cent of gross domestic product.

Thirdly, climate change is a global phenomenon that will continue to affect Ethiopia's efforts to achieve the MDGs and its vision of sustained long-term growth and development to eradicate poverty. Clearly, the international community must tackle the difficult task of reconciling the challenge of mitigating and adapting to climate change while supporting the growth priorities of developing countries. To do so, it must mobilize financial and technological resources far beyond historical levels, especially for the least developed countries.

According to the Secretary-General's report, climate change is already having an impact on people. Extreme weather events have increased in frequency and intensity. In 2011, globally, some 106 million people were hit by floods and 60 million were affected by drought. In that regard, I would like to express Ethiopia's commitment to working with Member States to secure resources and a global binding agreement commensurate with the threat and impact of climate change by 2015, as agreed in Durban.

Fourthly, in the area of human rights, I fully agree with the comments just made by the representative of Brazil. The Human Rights Council must operate in a non-selective and constructive manner, especially through the universal periodic review, while maintaining the capacity to address situations of particular concern. In our view, human rights are most effectively ensured by dialogue and cooperation. Ethiopia is now prepared to engage directly in the process through membership in the Human Rights Council, for which we seek the support of the United Nations membership during the election in November.

The continuing terrorist attacks remind us that terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to all States and peoples. No cause or grievance can justify an act of terrorism. The third biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy concluded in June with an agreement to develop national and regional strategy implementation plans that enhance capacity-building efforts, including the Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism Initiative. The General Assembly should keep up the momentum and make every effort to reach an agreement on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Secretary-General and the staff of the United Nations for a job well done, both at Headquarters and in the field.

Ms. Díaz Mendoza (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela salutes Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and thanks him for presenting his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/67/1) to the General Assembly.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to peace, justice, solidarity and development. We are convinced that the full realization of those objectives requires unrestricted respect for international law, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Throughout its history, the United Nations has recorded important achievements in the area of the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, its record is not free of failures or limitations. Those can be attributed to lack of agreement among Member States, especially in relation to the actions of hegemonic Powers that have tried to impose their agendas to the detriment of the sovereignty, self-determination and collective interests of peoples and Governments that do not support neoliberalism and seek a life in the concert of the United Nations

The role of the United Nations in the search for peaceful settlements of disputes that affect international peace and security must be framed within the purposes and principles of the Charter that are expressed in non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the sovereign equality of States, non-use of force or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, and respect for sovereignty.

The creation of favourable economic and social conditions is fundamental to settling disputes, which are generated by poverty, social exclusion and racism — powerful breeding grounds for crises with repercussions for international peace and security. But it is also evident that those countries where social justice and the eradication of hunger and poverty are taking shape or are progressively prevailing are being harassed, intimidated, blasphemed and manipulated for not being examples of the injustices that capitalism creates with its brutal and neoliberal methods. That has been the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns the threat of or use of force to resolve disputes. It therefore categorically rejects military interventions carried out by the imperial Powers and their allies. Venezuela is concerned about the role of the Security Council with regard to the unilateral use of force under the pretext of legitimate defence and, more recently, under the misnomer "responsibility to protect", in clear violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Syria, as was Libya, is the object of meddling by the imperial Powers and their allies, who support — through training, financing, political support and weapons — armed groups that have been compromised by committing acts of violence that have caused the deaths of thousands of civilians. The Venezuelan Government highlights the need to encourage dialogue between the parties to the conflict and reach a resolution to the conflict that is agreed between the parties themselves, free from foreign interference. This will create a stable climate conducive to the strengthening of democracy and the political reforms encouraged by President Al-Assad.

The new global reality presents new challenges to the common goal of building a new international order under the auspices of the United Nations that is multipolar, fair and equitable and characterized by consensual and inclusive multilateralism. Developing countries find themselves facing a serious social, economic and political crisis and a new offensive on the part of imperial Powers, which are trying to undermine the foundation of solidarity between peoples and attempting once again to impose their strategic interests, undermining our aspirations to peace, justice, development, solidarity and cooperation. Humankind faces a complex and dynamic situation in which the political and economic elites of the world refuse to set aside their selfish, partial views at a time when the reality of issues that involve the destiny of peoples must be addressed in a comprehensive manner and in a spirit of dialogue and solidarity.

The economic and political realities of our times have demonstrated that the global crisis of capitalism is structural in nature and calls for a radical change in the unfair economic and financial order. The Bretton Woods institutions have failed, as evidenced by the crisis in Europe and other countries of the North. The situation calls for the building of a new financial architecture on the basis of inclusive multilateralism that expresses the interests of all the peoples of the world.

We believe that the United Nations must promote a model of sustainable development based on such values as solidarity, justice, social inclusion, equality, respect for human rights and civic participation. There must be respect for the diversity of systems and approaches. Each State has a sovereign right to implement these in order to achieve its objectives in terms of development, prosperity and the well-being of its people. In a world that is increasingly interrelated, this right is crucial in relations and cooperation among States in the pursuit of a peaceful, prosperous world.

Venezuela supports initiatives on dialogue and coexistence between civilizations and religions as important elements to support international efforts to promote dialogue and diversity on the basis of justice, brotherhood and equality. Such efforts must oppose any attempt to impose monoculturalism or specific political, economic, social, legal or cultural development models; instead, they should promote dialogue between civilizations, the culture of peace and interfaith dialogues that will contribute to peace, security, stability and development.

We also support the promotion of a culture of peace based on the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation and colonial domination, the prevention of violence, the promotion of non-violence, strict adherence to the principles of international relations enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and the full exercise of the right to development.

In that respect, the establishment of a culture of peace in the world is unquestionably related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. At least 2.5 billion people survive on less than €2 a day, 854 million go hungry, 144 million children of school age do not go to school, 11 million children under 5 years of age die every year, 2.4 billion people have no access to safe drinking water, and 3 million die of HIV/AIDS every year. When we take into account the impact of war and social conflicts in some areas of the world and the alarming effects of climate change, floods, earthquakes, forest fires and so on, it is impossible to speak of peace in the world.

Reform of the United Nations, especially its main organs, is a pending task that must be addressed in order to strengthen the Organization. The General

Assembly must be revitalized in accordance with the functions given to it by the Charter in terms of peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and international cooperation, taking its democratic, representative and universal nature into account. We also believe that the Security Council must be reformed in order to make it more democratic, transparent and legitimate, in line with the reality of current times. The anachronistic right of veto must be eliminated and the principle of the sovereign equality of States upheld. Countries of the developing world in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia must be added as new permanent members. The Economic and Social Council must fulfil its tasks as the main policy coordination body in the economic and social areas, in accordance with the tasks assigned to it by the Charter at its establishment.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Chullikatt (Holy See): As the Secretary-General notes in his report (A/67/1), it was 70 years ago that world leaders united to adopt the purposes and principles that continue to guide this institution. These principles were valid then, and they remain compelling today. While the succeeding years since the founding of the Organization have seen progress in many areas of its mandate, still today too many long for a world free of war, where legal systems are just, where everyone's life is respected, protected and defended, where Governments and other institutions affecting the international order are held accountable, and where basic health and nutrition are an expected right rather than an elusive dream.

The United Nations continues to face a number of additional challenges in fulfilling its mandate, but at the heart of these challenges is the need to foster trust — trust between nations, trust within society, and trust that those in positions of power will carry out their mandate in a way that promotes the common good for all of society rather than only to advance self-seeking interests. Today, this trust remains elusive and, rather than working together to restore such trust, we increasingly see major decisions on issues such as international security, disarmament, protection of the environment, international financial governance, international trade, population, health care, food security and human rights being made in venues in which those in power can more easily dictate the terms of the agreement rather than in an organization, such as the United Nations, where all States in the family of nations have a say in how best to achieve the common good.

While this increasing trend makes short-term agreements easier to achieve, it makes long-term global development, peace and security, and the other noble responsibilities of the United Nations more difficult to achieve. It is therefore imperative that all actors, whether they be States, civil society organizations or religious institutions, renew their commitment to fostering greater trust among one another and recommit themselves to working together to address the challenges of our time so that the authentic objectives of this institution may be fulfilled.

As the Assembly prepares for the post-2015 development agenda, the Holy See looks forward to working with delegations to ensure that the proposed sustainable development goals are capable of addressing the challenges of the world in a manner that places the human person at the centre of concern, rather than viewing the person as an obstacle to development. That model must recognize that the aim of development is not simply economic growth, but a true growth of the entire human person in all its dimensions, including its intellectual, spiritual or physical development.

In addition, we must recognize that in order to foster a human-centred development model, we must work to ensure that this labour is done in a manner that respects the relationship between humankind and the environment and our role as responsible stewards of creation. That relationship requires recognition that care for the environment, human prosperity and development are not mutually exclusive concepts. Rather, responsible concern for the environment requires recognition that all members of society have a responsibility to be good stewards of our planet so that we can fulfil our accountability to each other and succeeding generations.

When human rights are not based on their natural moral and ethical foundation, they can become a tool not for the liberation of peoples, but for suppressing discussion about rights and what they constitute, and the promotion of so-called human rights that promote the taking of life itself. That tragic consequence can be seen in many regions of the world and in some organizations, where the right to life of the unborn or the lives of the elderly or the disabled are seen not as a paramount and inviolable right to be safeguarded, but rather as a secondary right that must be subjugated to other so-called human rights that are not based on the natural moral law. To respect the right to life from the moment of conception to natural death is not an infringement of rights, but rather the fulfilment of our promise as leaders of nations to recognize the inherent dignity of all members of the human family, no matter how young, or how frail, or how helpless.

Likewise, the right to religious freedom remains elusive in many parts of the world. In many corners of the globe, the very practice or profession of one's faith is deemed unwelcome, illegal or blasphemous. Even in the great democracies of the world, we see today that this first freedom is under attack. The right to religious freedom encompasses not only the right to hold one's faith in private, but also the freedom to preach, to educate, to evangelize and to contribute to the political and social discourse in order to achieve the common good. That public profession of an individual's faith should not be seen as a danger to democratic governance or as a violation of a public safety that requires limitation; rather, it must be understood and accepted as a welcome addition to the debates that foster vibrant and healthy Governments and societies which claim or desire to be equal members of the international order.

Therefore, it is imperative that leaders of this institution and its Member States make every effort to ensure that human rights are applied and interpreted in a way that fosters trust within society and within this institution. Efforts to radically redefine or reinterpret human rights using a reductionist and relativist notion of humankind or by relying on ambiguous terminology will lead in the end to a breakdown in trust in those bodies mandated to upholding human rights. Such attempts, moreover, foster distrust between nations and result in a world where basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are challenged rather than protected.

In order to respect those rights, the United Nations and its membership must work collectively to recommit themselves to the visions set out in the Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so as to reaffirm the transcendent dignity of the human person, not in theory or as a secondary factor, but rather as the foundation upon which true and genuine respect for human rights, development and lasting peace and security can take root.

In conclusion, this institution was founded in large part on the belief that fostering greater trust between nations will lead to a more prosperous and peaceful world. Let us join in unambiguous concert to promote that trust so that, together, we will fulfil our duty to achieve the objectives for which this great Organization was established.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention, and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Khampa (India): I am taking the floor to exercise India's right of reply. The representative of Pakistan has regrettably made a gratuitous reference, totally out of context, to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India. Such remarks deserve to be rejected in their entirety.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): With reference to what we have heard just now, I think "gratuitous" is a rather favoured word with the Indian delegation and it is something that we hear every time Kashmir is mentioned. Suffice it to say that vocabulary cannot be a substitute for truth. If that were the case, Noah Webster would be a prophet. I will just confine myself to giving the advice that we should not tackle important, long-standing, festering issues like that of Kashmir by just trying to cast them aside with such casual remarks.

Mrs. Khampa (India): I am taking the floor again to exercise our second right of reply in response to the untenable references made once again by the representative of Pakistan about the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is and has always been an integral part of India. We reject those remarks, which have no place in this Assembly.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): Lest repetition create the illusion of veracity, I would just like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the exchanges we have had with the Indian delegation previously on this subject during the ongoing sixty-seventh session of the Assembly, which would bring out the truth of the matter. Again, I do not wish to further dignify these mechanical retorts on an issue of such grave international importance, as underlined by various resolutions of the Security Council, which remain unimplemented to this day.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/67/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 106.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations

A/67/PV.23

General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 11 October 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić .... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/67/502)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee (A/67/502) that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The President: Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter" without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 67/2).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda items 115 and 116

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: I welcome this opportunity to address the Assembly at the start of the debate on how to further strengthen the authority of the General Assembly. This is the only body in which all countries come together as sovereign equals to advance the aims of the Charter of the United Nations. To be able to meet the expectations of humankind, we must continue with the process of revitalizing and modernizing it.

The topic we are focusing on today is not a new one. As early as in 1948, the General Assembly recognized for the first time the need to adapt to changing circumstances. Near the end of the third session — in fact, one day after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted — an additional item was placed on the agenda of the plenary. It called for the creation of an ad hoc committee to consider methods and procedures which would enable the General Assembly to discharge its functions more effectively and expeditiously. Decades later, we continue to try to make headway in what has always been understood as a work in progress.

Let me begin by thanking Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Mrs. Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of the Gambia, for leading the Ad Hoc Working Group on

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the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session. Its report, contained in document A/66/891, together with resolution 66/294, adopted by consensus on the final day of that session, will guide our deliberations over the coming year.

For the first time, the two agenda items being discussed today have been scheduled to immediately follow the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. This was done to highlight their importance for the General Assembly. I believe it is critical for Member States to consistently implement that which has already been agreed in the Hall. That should be a core principle of effective multilateralism in the twenty-first century.

During this session, the Ad Hoc Working Group is mandated to review the inventory of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization, and to issue an updated version in its report to the plenary. It is my sincere hope that the findings of the review will suggest that we are moving in the right direction. So far, we have made some progress in a number of areas and, as President, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the process is further enhanced. I have already begun to build closer relationships with the other main bodies of the United Nations. I have started to exchange views with the Secretary-General, the Presidents of the Security Council and Economic and Social Council, and the Heads of various United Nations entities and specialized agencies, as well as with the Chairs of the Main Committees. Yesterday, in fact, I met with this last group. I thanked those in attendance for their commitment to our shared goals, and reiterated my belief that their deliberations are critical to advancing the plenary's agenda.

The increasing number of informal thematic debates and high-level events has contributed to the relevance of this body in addressing a growing number of global issues. As mandated by resolution 66/294, I will consult with Member States on the topics to be discussed, with a view to achieving results-oriented outcomes at the sixty-seventh session. As President, I will continue the tradition established by my predecessors and convene informal meetings of the plenary before and after Group of 20 (G-20) preparatory meetings, as well as the annual Heads of State or Government Summit.

In my view, however, we should work on increasing the complementarity of both policies and actions between the United Nations and key international economic players. It is with this in mind that I have proposed to launch a process leading to the establishment of an effective consultative framework between the General Assembly and international financial and trade institutions, as well as groupings such as the G-20. I believe that if we do this in the right way, the key actors' decisions can actually help strengthen and further revitalize the General Assembly.

The issue before us today has been on the General Assembly's agenda for decades, and some breakthroughs have been made. But I believe that much more needs to be done. Let us take a step back for a moment and consider the overall context in which the process of revitalization is taking place. Whether in the political, economic or technological realm, the world is becoming increasingly volatile and unpredictable. The overall scope and rapidity of the transformations we face are unprecedented in the annals of history. This global trend is likely to continue well into the future.

The speed of the changes taking place outside these walls is increasingly outpacing the tempo of the changes we are able to agree upon in this building. To retain the capacity to change the world for the better, we will need to find the strength to keep changing ourselves.I am afraid that we are confronted with the choice of either adapting to the new times, or simply being left behind to watch the gap between our duties and our capabilities widen by the day. I am not advocating haste or revolution, but I am trying to instil a sense of urgency.

I have tremendous faith in the United Nations. It is doubtless the greatest humanist project of the twentieth century, and I firmly believe that its greatness should extend well into the twenty-first. But that is not going to happen by default. A bold action is needed. It is up to the Member States — and to the Member States only — to propose and decide how to move forward. I was elected to serve them, to serve the General Assembly, and I pledge my unwavering commitment to its endeavours. I believe we all are in favour of revitalizing and thereby strengthening the authority of the Assembly. Yet, as the nineteenth-century Scottish social commentator Thomas Carlyle succinctly put it, conviction is worthless unless it is converted into conduct.

So let us conduct ourselves with the courage of our convictions. Let us revitalize this institution so that it remains, in the words of the Charter, a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. On behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I would like to thank you, Sir, for the level of priority you intend to dedicate to the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly and for having taken the initiative to start with that important topic immediately after the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/1). You can count on the Non-Aligned Movement to further convey the message thereof.

At the outset, allow me to express the gratitude of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement to Ambassador Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of the Gambia, and Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, for their tireless efforts and excellent work in co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session.

NAM welcomes the adoption of resolution 66/294 last September, by which the Assembly established the Working Group to discuss the issues related to the Assembly's revitalization during the sixty-seventh session, and to continue, in particular, to build on the progress achieved at past Assembly sessions and on previous resolutions, and to assess the status of their implementation.

That assessment and a clear identification of the underlying causes behind any lack of implementation are of utmost importance if we are to progressively eliminate the constraints that continue to prevent the process of revitalizing the General Assembly from realizing its full potential. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms the validity and relevance of its principled positions related to the process and reiterates its willingness to contribute effectively and constructively to the activities of the Working Group with a view to identifying ways and means to strengthen the role and authority of the Assembly.

We underline that the revitalization process is of a political nature, aimed mainly at strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ in the wider United Nations system. The Movement therefore reiterates the importance of the revitalization of the Assembly as an item that deserves consideration on an equal footing with other important topics and welcomes the President's decision y to address it at the beginning of the current session, so that we can make better use of today's deliberations in ourwork throughout the session. In our view, new ideas on how to explore further ways and means of reinvigorating the process in order to give it a higher profile warrant our consideration.

The Non-Aligned Movement emphasizes the need to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal organ of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among the organs within their respective Charter-based functions and powers. In that regard, the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions as well as all Assembly resolutions which clarify its relationship with the Assembly and other principal organs.

NAM reiterates its concern, raised at previous sessions, about the continuous attempt by the Security Council to encroach upon the powers and prerogatives of the General Assembly. Article 24 of the Charter does not endow the Security Council with the competence to address issues that fall within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

In the same vein, NAM calls on the Security Council to submit a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the work of the Council. Furthermore, the Movement is convinced that activities of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization will contribute greatly to the whole process of revitalization and supports the initiative of the creation of an open-ended working group to study the proper implementation of the Charter with respect to the functional relationship of its main organs, in particular the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the initiative, under the aforementioned Special Committee, on strengthening the role of the Organization and enhancing its effectiveness.

We reaffirm the role and authority of the General Assembly, including in questions related to international peace and security, and its intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic character, which have immensely contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the goals of the Organization. The Movement also reaffirms the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations as such and underscores the necessity to consult with Member States on initiatives and activities undertaken within the Organization and the right of all Member States to express their positions before the Assembly at any time they wish to do so.

The General Assembly, as the policymaking organ of the Organization, holds the authority and the essential role of drafting the framework, upholding the principles and identifying the objectives of the wider United Nations system and its numerous organs, agencies and programmes. Furthermore, the Assembly should remain the principal organ that reviews the work of all its subsidiary organs and bodies. It should maintain its role and mandate in setting the priorities of the United Nations in considering all budgetary and administrative issues and reforms, including its absolute authority to allocate and reallocate financial and human resources, and in the appointment of senior officials of the Secretariat, in accordance with the Charter and relevant Assembly resolutions. In that regard, the prerogatives of the Assembly, as the chief oversight organ of the Organization, including on management and procurement for peacekeeping operations, must be respected.

While expressing its readiness to continue to support all ongoing efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the General Assembly, NAM wishes to state that it will oppose any approach that seeks to undermine or minimize the achievements of the Assembly, diminish its current role and functioning or raise questions about its relevance and credibility.

It is clear that while the prerogatives of the President of the General Assembly have not changed, his role and activities have evolved over the past years, in adapting to the growing activities, conferences and initiatives of the Assembly, performing official protocol functions, representing the Assembly around the world, and making the Assembly's work better known and more visible. Therefore, the activities of the Office of the President of the General Assembly have increased drastically over the years. The agenda of the Assembly and consequently that of its President include a tremendous number of issues.

The expansion of activities of the General Assembly — including the yearly adoption of more or less 300 resolutions and decisions, the establishment of working groups and facilitations that convene meetings and consultations throughout the year — has made the President's presence and active participation necessary during the whole session. The Assembly's workload is no longer limited to the main part of its session but rather covers the whole period from the opening of the session in September to its closing. This tremendous and increasing activity should of course be matched with the necessary resources, both human and financial.

NAM recalls in this regard that resolution 66/294 requests the Secretary-General to submit proposals, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, to review the budget allocations to the Office of the President of General Assembly, and emphasizes the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Office, including through the strengthening of its institutional memory. While noting with appreciation the progress already achieved in that regard, we are of the view that a particular effort should be devoted to the implementation of the already existing resolutions on this matter, as well as to identifying, during the upcoming discussions of the Working Group, ways and means to pursue this objective progressively and with determination.

Among other prerogatives and mandates of the General Assembly, the selection and appointment of Secretaries-General of the United Nations is of utmost importance. As for future Secretary-General mandates, NAM reaffirms the need for the selection of the Secretary-General to be transparent to and inclusive of all Member States and emphasizes, therefore, the need for the Assembly's participation in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General to be more active, effective and efficient, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the provisions of its resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301 and 66/294. NAM stresses the importance of the full implementation of those resolutions in the process of the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that a reinvigorated General Assembly, fully exerting its role and authority in a more responsive environment, would significantly contribute to the strengthening of the wider United Nations system and to the improvement of international governance and enhancement of multilateralism.

The President: I call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Tricot (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The European Union and its member States are strongly attached to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. In this context, we are committed to revitalization and to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions. It is our wish that the General Assembly, as the only intergovernmental body with universal membership, be able to take up the challenge of conciliating legitimacy and efficiency in a context of emerging global challenges.

We believe that revitalization can be ensured only when the General Assembly takes relevant action on issues of common concern to the international community. By doing so, it lives up to its role as one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The European Union and its member States welcome the adoption of resolution 66/294. We would like to stress the importance of the implementation of all the Assembly's resolutions, including those on the revitalization of its work, and note the impact of such implementation on the authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly. The revitalization of the Assembly's work is clearly interlinked with the overall reform of the United Nations.

I would like to assure the Assembly that the European Union and its member States will continue to engage in a pragmatic manner in all future proceedings on the matter.

Mr. Advani (India): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, upon your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. You carry an enormous responsibility on your shoulders, and I wish you the very best for the year ahead.

Many of us with long living memories thought that the decade that ended in 2010 was the most challenging the international community had witnessed since the Second World War. But today we know better. Never before has the need for enduring calm and certainty in international relations been felt as ardently as over the past few years. The political upheaval in West Asia, the Gulf and North Africa that began in early 2011 and is still continuing is unprecedented, in terms of both scale and impact. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis, which began in the developed world and spread southwards, has exposed the downside of globalization and seriously undermined the Cold War-era structures of global governance.

Our responses to the most challenging sociopolitical and economic crises of the past 50 years cannot be patchy and half-hearted. The process should begin here at the United Nations and must be guided by a sense of urgency.

Today, I was listening very carefully to you, Sir, when you made your introductory remarks, and I fully agree with what you had to say regarding the urgency of what we propose to do today. To quote what you said this morning:

> "I am afraid we are confronted with the choice of either adapting to new times or simply being left behind to watch the gap between our duties and our capabilities widen by the day. I am not advocating haste or revolution, but I am trying to instil a sense of urgency."

The ongoing global financial and economic crisis is certainly asking us to do this immediately.

First and foremost, the deficit in global governance must be addressed. The Security Council, whose structure and set of governing norms harken back to the realities of the late 1940s, is, I stress, an anachronism. For the Council to reflect current geopolitical realities, it needs to be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. A reformed Council must include countries that are willing to bear additional burdens relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and be able to sustain worldwide campaigns against new and emerging global threats, including terrorism and piracy. That is exactly what you stressed, Sir, when you said that the gap between our duties and capabilities is widening by the day.

Next, we need to revitalize the General Assembly. We need to change it from a mere talking shop to a place where transnational issues that impact each and every one of us are addressed swiftly and truly global solutions prescribed. We therefore appreciate the importance that you, Sir, have attached to this issue. You told Member States on the first day of the current session, on 18 September 2012:

> "To revitalize this most universal of multilateral institutions is to renew our faith not only in the United Nations programmes and purposes, but also in each other. Member States can count on me to assist and facilitate in advancing the revitalization agenda, including the Security Council reform process" (*A/67/PV.1, p. 3*).

We welcome your resolve, Mr. President. You can count on India's support in this regard.

The starting point of my delegation's position is the firm belief that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is respected, both in letter and in spirit. The Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the United Nations in the formulation of multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. In particular, revitalization must restore the primacy of the United Nations in development matters.

Without prejudging the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which should start soon, I would like to place on record the Indian delegation's considered views on the two agenda items under consideration today.

First of all, it is critical that we establish a respectful relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to their respective mandates, in the spirit of the Charter. The Council should not encroach upon the Assembly's mandate through extremely wide and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression, and of the situations under which it can take action under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Assembly's competence in areas such as the process of standard-setting and codification of international law must be scrupulously respected.

It is clear that the Council's agenda is overburdened, to say the least, because it has anointed itself with the responsibility of dealing with issues that, though seemingly important, leave it with less time to deal with the real hotspots that constitute the real threats to international peace and security. The balance between the Assembly and the Council is only one of the dimensions of what needs to be addressed.

Secondly, the Assembly, we believe, must have a greater say in the process of selecting the Secretary-General. The continued circumscription of the Assembly's role and responsibilities in the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General needs to change in the interests of the United Nations system in general and the Assembly's prerogatives in particular.

We could also identify objective criteria for candidatures, including commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and extensive leadership, administrative and diplomatic experience, with due regard being given to regional rotation and gender equality. It would be equally useful and practical to encourage the formal presentation of candidatures in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with Member States and also requires candidates to present their views to all members of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, the Assembly and the other entities that form part of the United Nations system must reflect diplomatic best practices in their day-to-day functioning. They have a lot to learn from Member States in this regard.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the international community. The General Assembly can expect India's constructive support and participation in these efforts.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): Egypt associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation of your decision, Mr. President, to include the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly at the top of your priorities during the sixty-seventh session, and for your pledge to assist in advancing the revitalization agenda.

I take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representatives of the Gambia and Georgia for their efforts as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session, which led to the adoption of resolution 66/294. That resolution and the report (A/67/891) represent a strong basis for the discussions during the current session.

The increasing challenges facing our world today require, more than ever, a strong and responsive General Assembly, so that this universal body may play its leading role in global governance in the political, economical and social spheres. For more than two decades, Member States have adopted by consensus resolutions containing specific measures to revitalize the work of the General Assembly as the main deliberative, policy-making and representative principal organ of the United Nations. These measures were not fully implemented, due to the lack of political will to ensure that the Assembly fulfils its mandate according to the Charter.

Egypt believes that the first step towards achieving tangible progress in the revitalization of the Assembly is to transform decisions into actions. The Ad Hoc Working Group should continue to evaluate the status of implementation of the provisions of all previously adopted resolutions to identify the obstacles hindering their implementation, and then specify what should be done to overcome them. One of the main obstacles facing the revitalization of the work of the Assembly is the Security Council's continued encroachment on its role and functions. The Council tends to redefine the scope of its competence through a broader interpretation of the issues that may constitute a threat to international peace and security.

We should strive to establish a mutually reinforcing and complementary relationship between the principal organs of the United Nations. It is not sufficient to claim that each individual body performs its functions in accordance with the Charter. It is necessary to promote greater coordination among them. The General Assembly should not be a mere forum for deliberations. It must also be a forum for finding solutions. It should assume a more proactive role in responding to emerging challenges of common concern to the international community. The adoption of resolutions 66/253 A and 66/253 B on the situation in Syria shows clearly that the Assembly can make decisions where the Council cannot.

As the current Chair of the Arab Group, Egypt, along with all the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, is eager to see the State of Palestine become a full Member of the United Nations. The least we can expect at this stage of the current session is that the General Assembly will adopt a resolution to upgrade Palestine's status to that of a non-member observer State at the United Nations, proving that the Assembly supports the principles of justice and equality without selectivity or politicization.

Egypt also commends you, Mr. President, for choosing "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means" as the overarching theme for the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. It is completely consistent with the objective of strengthening the role of the Assembly in the areas of international peace and security and serving the noble cause of preventing new conflicts and resolving existing ones. The Assembly should continue to increase the visibility of its work by interacting more with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Mr. President, your Office should be further strengthened through the allocation of more financial and human resources from the United Nations regular budget so that it can keep up with the growing demands, workload and responsibilities of the President of the General Assembly from one session to the next. It is not acceptable that the budget allocation for the Office has not increased since 1998. The establishment in 2010 of the Trust Fund in support of the Office of the President was not the best solution. No contribution was made to the Trust Fund during the sixty-sixth session. That is why the President's Office should not have to rely on voluntary contributions. Resources should be increased from within the regular budget in order not to affect the credibility or impartiality of the President's position.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. The General Assembly should be more involved at an early stage in the selection process and in identifying candidates for this key post.

Ms. Flores (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is linked to other processes under the wider umbrella of the United Nations reform. It should not be considered in isolation from the wider context of institutional reform of the United Nations. There is a dire need to address every element of the reform process with equal attention. The issue of the revitalization of the Assembly lies at the core of that process. In conclusion, I would particularly like to thank the President for his introduction of this item this morning, and for his inspirational statement. I would also like to assure him of the Egyptian delegation's full support for all his efforts to enhance the role of the General Assembly in achieving peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Mr. Singh (Malaysia): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the President for convening this meeting on an issue that is of particular importance to us and that we feel strongly about. It is pleasing to note that the President feels as strongly about it as we do. I would also like to express Malaysia's appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the Gambia for their efforts and leadership in steering the Ad Hoc

Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the Assembly's sixty-sixth session. We appreciate the convening of four separate thematic meetings that enabled Member States to clearly focus on various aspects of revitalization, one theme at a time. Those discussions, along with all the efforts by Member States, culminated in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/66/891), for which we should also thank the co-Chairs. On that note, I wish to align my statement with that made by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Year after year, revitalization remains a priority issue for the General Assembly. Despite the attention it attracts, we have managed to achieve only qualified success in revitalizing it. Over the years, we have seen some improvements in the Assembly's working methods, but they are minor. We have still failed to address the real issue of why the General Assembly must be revitalized. We should not forget that the key word here is "revitalization", not "minor improvements". The General Assembly is unquestionably the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is the highest authoritative body of the United Nations, since it represents all 193 Member States. We must therefore accord it the role and authority it rightly deserves.

My delegation firmly believes that the lack of implementation of General Assembly resolutions continues to be the biggest stumbling block to enhancing its role and effectiveness. We reiterate that no other weakness of the General Assembly undermines its relevance or effectiveness more than the failure to implement resolutions. Malaysia commends the Ad Hoc Working Group's decision to continue its review of the Assembly's resolutions on revitalization. We look forward to receiving the updated inventory of those resolutions, which will give Member States a better understanding of the reasons behind the failure to implement them. The Ad Hoc Working Group could then discuss the issue and find ways to overcome problems so as to ensure that the resolutions are implemented. This is the first step towards the ultimate goal of realizing the full implementation of all Assembly resolutions.

Malaysia continues to take the issue of encroachment seriously. We cannot emphasize enough the need for all principal organs, especially the two leading organs — the General Assembly and the Security Council — to faithfully respect each other's mandates, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Both organs must work together in consultation and cooperation to create a more harmonious working relationship. Encroachment by one organ on the mandate of the other would severely affect not only the functioning of the organ itself, but the entire United Nations machinery.

It is obvious that the role and activities of the President of the General Assembly have evolved significantly over the years. A greater number of issues and agenda items are now considered by the Assembly than was the case just a few years ago. Furthermore, the workload of the General Assembly now spans the whole year rather than being limited to its main session. It is therefore only natural that the Office of the President should be provided with the additional resources required to enable the President to efficiently and effectively perform the role that has been entrusted to him or her by the United Nations Charter.

While we recognize the benefits of the Trust Fund established to assist in the funding of the work of the President of the Assembly, it is nonetheless important that the funding from the regular budget be increased so that the Office of the President will no longer be dependent on the Trust Fund and voluntary contributions. In this regard, Malaysia looks forward to proposals to review the budget of the Office of the President of the General Assembly for the biennium 2014-2015.

On the subject of the appointment of the Secretary-General, Malaysia firmly believes that the Assembly needs to play a more meaningful role in the selection process. That process needs to be more transparent and inclusive of all Member States, as the Secretary-General represents all the Members of the United Nations and not merely the members of the Security Council. It is therefore important, when selecting and appointing the Secretary-General in future, to implement past resolutions, especially paragraphs 17 to 22 of the annex to resolution 60/286.

There is an undeniable need to focus on the substantive aspects of the revitalization process and to ensure that the General Assembly continues in its role as the principal policy-making and norm-setting organ of the United Nations. The issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly has been the subject of plenary debate since 1991. Given the number of years this issue has been considered, it is high time that all Member States approach the subject with openness and the necessary political will to realize tangible and substantial progress. If the pace of reform continues to be as slow as it has been in the past, we will face the awkward task of revitalizing the revitalization process. This is something we should certainly avoid.

Mr. Sergeyev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the President for convening today's meeting.

The Russian delegation intends to continue to participate constructively in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at this session. We hope that the work of this Group will be balanced, realistic and depoliticized and will seek to enhance the effectiveness of the General Assembly. All initiatives and proposals must be based on the principle of strict respect for the distribution of powers among the principal United Nations organs, as set out in the Charter.

The emphasis in the work of the Group must be placed on the issue of improving the working methods of the General Assembly and streamlining its agenda. The Assembly's programme of work is in many ways overburdened, and it would therefore be appropriate to review the possibility of transferring some of its agenda items to a biennial or triennial cycle. It would also be appropriate to lighten the workload in terms of high-level meetings during the week of the general debate, when, due to the presence in New York of Heads of State and Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, there is an especially busy programme of events and meetings, including bilateral meetings. We should limit the number of high-level meetings during that period, and the remaining events should be evenly spread over the entire session of the Assembly.

We are prepared to examine proposals to enhance the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. However, we would point out that, as with any proposal that has financial implications for the United Nations regular budget, this issue must receive full consideration, in line with existing procedures, that is, in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. As to the General Assembly's role in selecting and appointing the Secretary-General, Russia has consistently advocated maintaining the current practice, based on Article 97 of the Charter, according to which the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

With respect to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, it seems that, to a large extent, this problem is related to the degree of realism and achievability of the goals and provisions of the original resolutions. Before a decision is proposed, it is important for us to ask ourselves how implementable it is in principle. Such an approach should also be followed in the Group's own work. We suggest that we adopt the line of "less is better".

Mr. Yaroshevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus attaches high priority to strengthening the role of the General Assembly. We support an enhanced role for the Assembly in resolving issues of international peace and security, in line with the United Nations Charter, and we want to maintain a balance between the principal organs of the United Nations in considering all issues on the United Nations agenda. We highlight the need to ensure proper implementation of General Assembly resolutions, to further enhance the role of the President of the Assembly and his Office, and to improve the methods for electing the Secretary-General and the working methods of the General Assembly.

The Belarus delegation commends the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. We are pleased to note the interactive debates that were held with the Chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly and representatives of the Secretariat and the effective work of the Chairs in organizing the negotiation process.

This year, on the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement, together with other participants in the negotiating process, a very important step, in our view, was taken towards enhancing the General Assembly's relevance and visibility. We can now can see it quite clearly when we simply open the *Journal of the United Nations*. Resolution 66/294, for the first time in many years, established the order in which the principal organs are set out in the *Journal*, in line with Article 7 of the Charter — that is, with the General Assembly first and then the Security Council. That is in line with the tradition that was followed in the early years of the Organization's existence.

With regard to the current session, the delegation of Belarus will continue to participate actively in the Ad Hoc Working Group. In particular, we believe that it is now urgently necessary to design and adopt mechanisms that will provide clear procedures for agreeing on the fielding of candidatures for the Assembly's Main Committees and an order of rotation for the chairs and rapporteurs from the regional groups. Adopting such a mechanism will facilitate enhancing the role and authority of the Assembly, streamline current practices and establish a clear mechanism for the election of Chairs and bureaux of the Main Committees. We call upon our partners to take an active part in working on the issue in order to achieve an effective and mutually acceptable decision.

Belarus is convinced that stepping up work to revitalize the General Assembly will also help us to make progress in the work of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. In that regard, we express our support for the initiative of Venezuela and Cuba, which is being considered in the framework of the Special Committee. Issues raised by our friends deserve serious and balanced examination, considering the functions and competencies of the General Assembly and the Security Council and the substantive decisions taken by them.

It is strategically important that, in the work to reanimate the activities of the General Assembly, the letter and spirit of the Charter be followed, as the Charter establishes that universal organ in the primary role, with its higher flexibility and capacity to promptly, appropriately and effectively respond to current issues of international life. In other words, the Assembly should be the world's "number one situation room" and should be considered as such. In that connection, the Belarus delegation shares the view of the President of the General Assembly stated earlier in the meeting that the General Assembly must "adapt... to the new times". The world that is changing before our very eyes, with globalization and technological revolutions and other types of revolutions, requires that the process of optimizing the work of the Assembly be a permanent, even uninterrupted, process.

Successful businessmen are convinced that they have to work every minute of the day on improving business processes. Businessmen are responsible for businesses and their employees, and they make profit their target. All of us regard as of paramount importance the more serious and important values of our shared responsibility, which is unconditional and far greater. Therefore our work — the work of the General Assembly — must conform to the very highest contemporary standards of efficacy, quality and practical results.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At present, the international situation is undergoing complex and profound changes. Under the new situation, the international community expects the United Nations to play a greater role in safeguarding world peace, promoting common development and strengthening international cooperation. The General Assembly is the Organization's pre-eminent policy deliberation body and one of its most important Charter bodies. The numerous Member States, particularly the developing countries, would like to see the General Assembly further enhance its prestige and efficiency and better fulfil the duties entrusted to it by the Charter.

The revitalization of the General Assembly bears on the vital interests of all Member States and has important, far-reaching implications for enhancing the prestige and credibility of the United Nations. China commends the President of the General Assembly for making revitalization of the Assembly one of his priority items and supports giving full play to the Assembly's policy deliberation function. The Assembly, on the basis of the development of the international situation and targeting the salient challenges faced by the United Nations in all fields, should emphasize deliberating on and dealing with important questions of common concern to Member States, particularly those involving the vital interests of the developing countries.

The General Assembly should give particular attention to, and step up efforts on, development issues so as to play a greater role in advancing international cooperation for development. It should strengthen its arrangements for division of work and cooperation with organs such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council so that each can deploy its full strength and step up information exchange and interaction.

On matters regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with the Security Council, on the basis of the division of work set out in the Charter. China supports improving the Assembly's working methods, simplifying its decision-making procedures and enhancing its efficiency. Enhancing the quality of reports and documents should be emphasized. Reports should be concise and clear, and analytical recommendations should be well targeted. Pragmatic, action-oriented work styles should be developed. Member States should also respect the solemnity of General Assembly resolutions and ensure their full implementation so as to safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the Assembly.

The effective functioning of the Office of the President is an important guarantee of the smooth work of the Assembly. China supports the strengthening of the Office of the President in both manpower and budgetary terms, particularly in order to resolve current difficulties faced by developing countries when carrying out the functions of the presidency.

The numerous Member States have high hopes for the revitalization of the General Assembly. China firmly supports the President's efforts to that end, for a more effective role for the Assembly in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of global development. China wishes to continue to advance the implementation of the series of resolutions on the revitalization of the Assembly within the framework of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We hope that the work will move steadily forward on the basis of democratic consultations, going from easier to more difficult issues in an orderly and gradual manner. China will work with other Member States for good progress on the important agenda item of the revitalization of the General Assembly during the current session of the Assembly.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba endorses the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represents the position of 120 countries. We wish to add some remarks in our national capacity.

First, the Cuban delegation wishes to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly for their commendable work during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Under their leadership, the Ad Hoc Working Group contributed to strengthening the leading role that the General Assembly plays in the system of international relations and in the Organization.

It is unacceptable that numerous General Assembly resolutions, despite being an important body of law, have not been implemented. That also applies to the many resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly, whose level of implementation is unacceptably low despite their having been adopted by consensus. As we have stated on previous occasions, the task of revitalizing the General Assembly cannot be limited to speeches. The General Assembly enjoys all the legal prerogatives necessary to act. We therefore hope that this year, the Ad Hoc Working Group will adopt a broad and flexible agenda aimed at achieving ambitious goals.

The General Assembly is the principal organ for deliberation, the adoption of policies and representation of the United Nations. Owing to its broad and democratic nature, it enjoys legitimacy and great prestige. It is the maximum expression of the principle of sovereign equality among States. The revitalization of its work is an issue of the greatest importance.

The main obstacle to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly is the lack of political will on the part of certain States that attempt to put their narrow political interests above the views of the majority. The revitalization issue is therefore not a technical matter, as some countries would have us believe, but fundamentally a political issue. It is necessary to strike the appropriate balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its concern over the attempts of the Security Council to establish legal norms and definitions, overlooking the fact that, under Article 13 of the Charter, the progressive development of international law and its codification are the exclusive responsibility of the General Assembly. Those dangerous trends and the increasing broadening of the agenda of the Security Council beyond its competence must immediately cease because they are clear violations of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and restrict the debate, transparency and democratic way in which the problems of today's world should be addressed.

We would like to take this opportunity to urgently appeal once again for a radical reform of the Security Council that transforms it into the transparent, participatory and democratic organ demanded by the international community. The action of the Security Council and its members is subject to international law, in particular the Charter.

We cannot speak of an Organization in consonance with the system of contemporary international relations without reforming the Security Council and placing the General Assembly at the centre of debate and multilateral work. The revitalization of the General Assembly is essential in order to achieve a genuine reform of the United Nations. We cannot be satisfied with our work until the General Assembly fully exercises all its functions and powers.

Cuba reiterates that only a universal and democratic organ, such as the General Assembly, can tackle the existing global problems, whose solutions exceed the limited capacity of a country or a group of countries, however powerful they believe themselves to be.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): At the outset, Indonesia thanks the President for convening this important debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which it fervently supports. Indonesia commends his strong commitment to strengthening the General Assembly's role in line with the Charter of the United Nations. We pledge our full support for his efforts and those of Member States towards realizing an effective Assembly.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We welcome the recent adoption of resolution 66/294, mandating the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly to continue its work on the issue during the sixty-seventh session. Resolution 66/294 underscores the zeal of delegations to reinforce the gravity of the reform process of the Assembly as an invaluable United Nations principal organ.

That the Assembly alone uniquely reflects the aspirations and concerns of all Member States must elevate the status of its revitalization efforts. We all need to participate to adequately support the work on strengthening the Assembly's role. We therefore stress the importance of this year's Ad Hoc Working Group continuing to build upon the results of previous sessions and how vital it is for us to support the Group as it carries out its work. Allow me to make a few observations on advancing the work of that Group

First, we emphasize updating and utilizing the inventory chart annexed to the annual reports of the Ad Hoc Working Group. The chart has proved to be a valuable tool in systematically identifying, monitoring and proposing solutions to the issue of the Assembly's revitalization. While my delegation is mindful of the sensitive nature of that exercise, with its obvious political, legal and budgetary implications, it is important for everyone to be aware of both the deficit and the progress in the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions on making the Assembly robust.

We therefore reiterate our request that the Secretariat update the chart and provide the Working Group with information about the challenges and obstacles hindering the timely and concrete implementation of all relevant resolutions pertaining to the various themes stated in the inventory charts.

Regarding the selection and appointment of the heads of United Nations agencies and senior officials of the Secretariat, we stress that their selection and appointment must also conform to the criteria of a more balanced geographical representation.

Secondly, we underline that a faithful implementation of United Nations resolutions is vital to strengthening the oversight role of the Assembly. In that regard, we concur that a strong oversight role of the Assembly is needed in the management and procurement of United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as in the wider United Nations system's post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, including in the areas of preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and mediation.

Indonesia is pleased that the theme of this year's session focuses on the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. That focus should be sustained. As we have already proposed, it would therefore be fitting that, just as peacekeeping issues have a forum in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, and post-conflict peacebuilding issues in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the issues of preventive diplomacy, mediation and peaceful conflict resolution should also have a dedicated United Nations intergovernmental forum. We also believe that the Assembly, which is one of the parent bodies of the PBC, should play a more effective role in guiding and supporting the Commission's work.

As my third and last point, I would submit that it is not for any shortage of resolutions or decisions that the Assembly has not yet fully claimed its Charter role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is chiefly the lack of political will and necessary support that is the cause. The many mutually shared and complex problems of our globalized world today will not be solved if we do not come together and strengthen the United Nations multilateral framework that we ourselves created for that purpose. Let us rise above our differences and empower and support the Assembly to perform its work effectively.

I affirm Indonesia's readiness to work actively and constructively with all delegations in our common endeavour to enhance the authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first of all like to thank the Ambassadors of the Gambia and Georgia for their efforts as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-sixth session. While aligning ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, my delegation would like to make the following remarks.

With regard to enhancing the role and the authority of the General Assembly, my country's delegation believes that the revitalization of the work of the Assembly is a key element in the comprehensive reform of the United Nations since, aside from the Assembly's role in establishing the norms and codification of international law, it is the principal deliberative and decision-making body and the most representative entity of the Organization. We affirm the need to continue strengthening the work and the role of that important organ by stepping up our efforts. At the same time, we must ensure that the relevant Assembly resolutions are implemented as a basic requirement for making progress in that area.

We believe that enhancing the role and authority of the Assembly means including urgent issues of common interest to the international community in its agenda. We must also ensure that the Assembly adapts rapidly to the global changes so that it maintains its strength and effectiveness and is able to meet emerging challenges. At the same time, we would like to reiterate that the Assembly should organize thematic debates. Such debates are a forum for interaction, allowing exchanges of views on current issues of great international importance to the Assembly. It would also enable us to interact with civil society. We hope that such debates will continue under Mr. Jeremić's presidency of the Assembly during this sixty-seventh session in order to achieve tangible and specific outcomes.

Strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly also requires that its role in maintaining international peace and security be recognized. Although Articles 12 and 24 of the Charter invest the Security Council with the primary responsibility in that area, that responsibility should not be the Council's sole domain. In our view, the Assembly must respond more rapidly to relevant issues that affect international peace and security.

We also affirm the need to improve the quality and content of the annual Security Council reports submitted to the Assembly; they should be more analytical and comprehensive so as to reflect the context in which the Council resolutions were adopted and the situations in which the Council was unable to take any action. Periodic meetings should be held among the heads of the principal organs of the United Nations, and Member States should be informed of the outcomes of those meetings on a regular basis. It is also important to promote cooperation and coordination and exchanges of information between the Assembly and those organs through regular and transparent mechanisms that specifically provide for the participation of the countries directly affected.

With regard to improving the working methods of the Assembly, my delegation believes that, while a number of resolutions have been adopted with a view to improving the working methods of the Main Committees and the convening of high-level meetings, it is nevertheless important to study thoroughly some relevant proposals, such as the need to streamline the work of the Committees, with the support of all Member States. We must also facilitate the access of developing countries to detailed and updated information on the websites of the Main Committees and make such information available in all the official languages, including Arabic. We should ensure that resolutions, reports and other documents are concise and that there is an exchange of best practices among the Committees, taking into account the specific nature of each Committee. Arrangements for strengthening the coordination of efforts and setting up schedules for high-level meetings so that they are optimally distributed, for the benefit of all, should also be thoroughly considered.

Regarding the appointment of the Secretary-General and the senior managers of the Secretariat, I reiterate our thanks to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to organize broader consultations with Member States, based on cooperation and transparency, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's performance. We hope that during this session we will focus on improving the selection process for senior managers of the Secretariat, while taking into account the recommendations set out in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/65/34), submitted during the sixty-fifth session.

With regard to strengthening the support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, we believe that it is necessary to provide the Office with adequate financial and human resources to allow the President of the Assembly to fulfil his function as well as possible. That support should at least reflect the changes in the regular budget. We also stress the notion of strengthening the Assembly's institutional memory and benefiting from lessons learned, in the interest of a smooth transition from one presidency to the next.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country's support for resolution 66/294, adopted in September, which provides for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. In our view, the priority of that Working Group should be to assess the difficulties in implementing resolutions so that the revitalization process can move forward.

Mr. Pope (United States of America): The United States would like to add its thanks to last year's co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassador Waffa-Ogoo of the Gambia and Ambassador Lomaia of Georgia, for their attention to this issue during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Their leadership culminated in the recently adopted resolution 66/294, which serves as a basis for our continued work on the topic. We also offer the incoming co-Chairs our full support once they are named. We look forward to working with fellow Member States as we consider the best options for revitalizing the General Assembly and build on the recommendations that we made to the Working Group this past session.

The United States is committed to multilateral engagement and a strong United Nations system. We recognize the important contributions of the General Assembly to fulfilling the mission of the United Nations. We hope that our discussions and the efforts of the Working Group will be constructive in allowing us to consider how we can improve working methods to better enable the Assembly to carry out its work.

We continue to advocate for measures to ensure the improved efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the United Nations system. Therefore, streamlining and prioritizing the agenda and improving the practices and working methods of the Main Committees will be the primary focus of our interactions with the Working Group during the sixty-seventh session.

As part of our efforts to ensure that the General Assembly remains relevant, we should also encourage the more timely publishing of General Assembly resolutions soon after their adoption. Informing others of our work will highlight the important issues that we cover and would encourage more expeditious implementation of General Assembly resolutions by Member States. Just as providing information to the world outside of New York is important, the General Assembly would be better served by increased interaction between the heads of the principal organs of the United Nations and the Chairs of the Main Committees and the President of the General Assembly.

That could perhaps be accomplished by exchanging views and priorities at the start of each new General Assembly session. Greater cooperation and increased coordination among the organs of the United Nations are critical for enabling us to achieve our goal of streamlining agendas and reducing wasteful overlap. We will continue to work with other delegations on our proposals to improve working methods, such as discontinuing the practice of adopting resolutions on outdated or obscure topics, merging or clustering items closely related in substance, proposing comprehensive or omnibus resolutions, and encouraging Member States to exercise greater discipline in their submission of draft resolutions, that is, to be more deliberate in keeping their statements succinct and to focus on key themes. We encourage Member States to consider reviewing existing resolutions biennially or triennially, rather than annually, and to exercise greater discipline in their submission of draft resolutions.

We also propose setting deadlines for achieving objectives, encouraging General Assembly working groups to complete their work on time, and rationalizing the General Assembly's meeting schedule to allow for widespread Member State participation. We hope to see progress on those goals during the sixty-seventh session.

The roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council in selecting the Secretary-General are clearly defined in the Charter. The General Assembly should not, as a priority for its own revitalization, consider pursuing changes to the Council's role in selecting a candidate for Secretary-General.

My delegation looks forward to working closely with the President of the General Assembly and with our counterparts from other delegations towards a constructive dialogue on concrete reform.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, on his assumption of duties as President and to thank him for his leadership in advancing the revitalization agenda. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, as well as to Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Mrs. Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of Gambia, who served as co-Chairs of the previous Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. Their initiative and dedicated work culminated in a report (A/66/891) that included the text of resolution 66/294, which was adopted by consensus on the final day of the previous session.

As the body in which all 193 Member States participate, the General Assembly is universally recognized as the most representative organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly is mandated to address any issue and questions falling under its responsibility, in accordance with the Charter, except as provided in Article 12.1.

During the course of this year's general debate, which was convened under the theme of "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", we witnessed a number of thoughtful statements by dignitaries along with various side events on the full spectrum of international issues. That demonstrated once again the importance of this body in multilateral diplomacy. The General Assembly can offer a useful forum as we endeavour to adapt to today's complex society. In the words of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's address to the General Assembly on 26 September, we need "to give adequate consideration to future generations and solve disputes calmly by reason under rules" (*A/67/PV.9, p. 47*) . The revitalization of the General Assembly is thus of high importance. Building upon mutual trust and confidence among Member States, we must make steady progress towards achieving feasible and realistic results on this matter.

During this first week of substantive debate on individual items on the agenda of the current session, let me present Japan's general views on several key issues.

First, it is essential to strengthen the relations between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations. With respect to the Security Council in particular, while the Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly may play a complementary role when the Council fails to fully exercise its functions, as in the case of the Syrian Arab Republic. Such functions of the General Assembly highlight the necessity of establishing a better relationship between the two organs. Regular consultations between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly would be one practical way of proceeding in that regard. We look forward to a debate on the annual report of the Security Council in November this year with a view to deepening discussions on the matter.

Secondly, with a view to enhancing its public awareness, the General Assembly must demonstrate to the people of the world that it is an organ that is capable of responding adequately to emerging challenges of common concern and of producing results-oriented outcomes. In that regard, thematic debates on relevant current issues, such as that held in April 2012 on disaster risk reduction, are most welcome. That practice has proved to be a useful instrument for encouraging broader and more flexible exchanges of views outside the constraints of the formal agenda. Resolution 66/290 on human security, adopted by consensus in September, is another notable achievement of the General Assembly. I am confident that the General Assembly will continue to make notable contributions to putting human security into practice.

The useful outcomes produced by the General Assembly lose their meaning if they are not implemented and followed up. Repeated non-implementation of General Assembly resolutions would over time risk diminishing the authority of the Assembly. My delegation will actively participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly in conducting a review of the inventory of General Assembly resolutions as agreed upon during the previous session.

Thirdly, it is important to rationalize the work of the General Assembly with a view to better enabling it to focus its activities on current challenges and events of common interest to the international community. It is appropriate, therefore, to continue to consider ways to streamline and prioritize the agenda of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. Various possibilities, such as having biennial or triennial reviews of agenda items and clustering or eliminating agenda items, should be given proper consideration, based on the relevant resolutions.

We also need to consider how to improve working methods so as to carry out the Assembly's work efficiently. For instance, we recall that Member States were not able to reach consensus on the composition of a working group on sustainable development goals before the opening of the current session, as was mandated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex). The question of the underrepresentation of the Asia-Pacific States, in terms of equitable geographical representation, might also be posed in that regard.

In the light of the considerable importance of the issue, Japan looks forward to having constructive discussions aimed at further enhancing the role of the General Assembly. I would like to reiterate once again Japan's commitment to making an active contribution to that end.

Mr. Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh): I am pleased to address the General Assembly plenary in this joint debate. Allow me first of all to join previous speakers in thanking Ambassador Waffa-Ogoo of the Gambia and Ambassador Lomaia of Georgia for their excellent work during the past session as the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. Their joint stewardship resulted in the adoption of resolution 66/294 in September, which we consider to be a very good basis for future discussion on the matter.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a critical component of the wider reform of the United Nations. The continued attention the issue is receiving indicates the collective desire of the United Nations membership to see the General Assembly attain its rightful place in global discourse. We are aware that reform is a continuous process, but we cannot discuss the issue ad infinitum. As we will embark on another round of discussions soon, we must make sure that the exercise results, within a reasonable period of time, in decisions that can be implemented.

There are a number of issues relating to the revitalization of the General Assembly that have been discussed at length over the past years and have been reflected in the relevant resolutions. The views and positions of my delegation are generally in line with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I will, however, touch on a few points to reinforce our position.

The objective of the revitalization of the Assembly is to strengthen its role and position as the chief deliberative, legislative, policy-making and representative body of the international community. The General Assembly should take the lead role in setting the global agenda and in formulating multilateral approaches to solving global concerns. The General Assembly is the forum in which all members of the international community have the opportunity to exchange ideas on an equal footing about issues of common interest and where global consensus can be reached and solutions to challenges can be found.

We recognize the importance of close cooperation and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations, especially among the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. In that regard, we welcome the regular meetings being held between the heads of those organs. That practice should continue in order to promote system-wide coherence and effectiveness.

There is a need for the two leading organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council, to work in concert and create a harmonious relationship for maintaining peace and security and fostering development. In so doing, both organs should respect each other's mandates as provided for in the Charter. We are concerned about the encroachment of the Security Council on the prerogatives of the General Assembly. It is being done through extremely broad interpretations of Charter provisions on threats to international peace and security.

Although several General Assembly resolutions have been adopted expressing concern on the issue, the encroachment unfortunately continues and has even increased in recent years. In our view, the agenda of the Council is already overburdened with real threats to international peace and security, leaving it little time to deal with peripheral issues, and it should therefore desist from doing so.

The role and activities of the President of the General Assembly have significantly evolved over the years. It is essential to ensure sufficient and predictable financial and human resources for the efficient and successful functioning of the Office of the President. We welcome the measures already adopted for its strengthening. We also welcome the decision to allocate dedicated staff within the Secretariat for coordinating the transitions between Presidents. It is important that funding for the Office from the regular budget be increased, so as to avoid having the President be dependent on the Trust Fund and on voluntary contributions to manage the Office. In our view, such dependence would affect the credibility and impartiality of that important position.

The General Assembly should have a strong role in the appointments of the senior management of the United Nations Secretariat. The selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General should be more transparent and inclusive. The process should involve the entire membership of the United Nations. Many resolutions have been adopted assigning the General Assembly a greater role in the process. We regret that most of the provisions regarding the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General are being overlooked. In that regard, we call for full implementation of the relevant provisions in considering future appointments.

The objective of revitalization is to render the Assembly more efficient and effective. It will require improvement of working methods and an adjustment of the agenda to meet current global realities. Discussions on improving working methods have been exhaustive, and we recognize some improvements. We appreciate the convening of thematic debates and high-level events aimed at establishing a broad international understanding of current issues. The General Committee also has an important role to play in considering ways and means to further improve the Assembly's working methods and improve its efficiency.

The agenda of the General Assembly has grown steadily in response to global demands and expectations. That has also led to a reduction in the actual time available to focus on any particular issue. We concur with the numerous General Assembly resolutions that call for rationalizing and streamlining the agenda so that we can pay more attention to priority issues. We support the biennialization, triennialization, clustering or even elimination of some items, while preserving options to add new items.

The number of reports requested should also be rationalized, so as to improve the quality and precision of documents and to permit more focused deliberation. We suggest that all of those actions be undertaken with the clear consent of the co-sponsoring or concerned States. There should be no attempt to employ artificial deadlines or so-called sunset clauses to remove an item without prior approval of the General Assembly or consent of the concerned State.

The issue of revitalization is a matter that requires political will. Technical improvement is possible through implementation of the proposals already made, but a true revitalization of the body would require genuine political will and openness. Let us garner such political will to make the General Assembly a truly deliberative and decision-making body for the benefit of all of humankind.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am pleased that the General Assembly is focusing due attention on the old yet crucially important issue of the revitalization of its work within the core of the working agenda of this sixty-seventh session. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Susan Waffa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of the Gambia, and Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, for their excellent stewardship of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the past session, leading to the adoption of resolution 66/294.

The Islamic Republic of Iran aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which, we believe, introduced a number of key points into this important debate. I would also like to make a few additional remarks and underline some points of particular significance.

The General Assembly debate on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly, held in December (see A/66/PV.70), reflected the urgent need to strengthen the central role of the Assembly in addressing issues of genuine concern to the international community in the political, economic and social arenas. In that connection, Iran and all the members of the Non-Aligned Movement have demonstrated their renewed commitment to engaging in a meaningful effort to reinforce the work of the General Assembly.

Since 1991, we have adopted 20 resolutions containing specific measures aimed at revitalizing and enhancing the work of the General Assembly as the most representative and chief deliberative and policy-making principal organ of the United Nations. Unfortunately, those measures, adopted by consensus, have not been fully implemented, owing mainly to the lack of the political will needed to ensure that the Assembly plays its leading role in joint global governance. A thorough evaluation of the status of implementation of General Assembly resolutions and a clear identification of the underlying reasons for their lack of implementation are therefore crucial to gradually eliminating the constraints that still prevent the revitalization process from achieving its full potential.

The fact that a large number of United Nations resolutions have dealt with the revitalization of the role and authority of the General Assembly clearly demonstrates how important the enhancement of the central role and authority of that organ is for the general membership. The Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the credibility and centrality of the United Nations in the formulation of multilateral approaches to resolving international issues. That was the role intended for the Assembly as expressed in Article 10 of the Charter, namely, that it should discuss any questions or matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any of the organs provided for in the Charter. We should therefore increase our efforts to explore concrete ways and means towards full realization of the Assembly's functions and powers, as laid down in the Charter.

Regarding relations between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, in particular, has been a matter of extensive debate, especially in the context of the various reform efforts, for many years. A considerable number of Assembly resolutions have established various criteria aimed at clarifying the relationship between those two important principal organs. The Charter confers important functions and responsibilities on both bodies.

Nonetheless, in recent years we have witnessed numerous cases of the Security Council's gradual but persistent encroachment on the functions and powers of the Assembly and other organs, such as the Economic and Social Council. We are particularly concerned about the Security Council's practice of setting standards, making laws and establishing definitions in areas beyond its competence. Let me recall Article 13 of the Charter, according to which the General Assembly, as the only universal organ representing every State Member of the United Nations, is primarily responsible for the progressive development of international law and its codification.

With regard to the role and responsibility of the General Assembly in the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General and in order to comply with Article 97 of the Charter, we should not relegate the role of the General Assembly to that of a rubber stamp. In our view, there is a strong desire among a large majority of the Members of the Organization to articulate and improve the procedure for the selection of the Secretary-General by giving the General Assembly a more meaningful and determining role in it.

At the same time, ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is also an important factor in enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President by allocating to it sufficient human and financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations, so as to enable all Member States, developed and developing, to have an equal opportunity to assume the presidency of the Assembly efficiently and effectively.

In conclusion, we believe that focusing only on procedural aspects and the working methods of the Assembly, important as they are, will not lead to the comprehensive improvement in its work that is long overdue. For that, a fundamental shift, an all-embracing approach and a vigorous effort are needed. The revitalization of the General Assembly, as part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, is a dynamic and continuing process. We should remain committed and constructive throughout that ongoing exercise, with a view to strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly as the most representative and chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations. My delegation stands ready to participate actively in the future deliberations to be held in that framework in a transparent, open and inclusive manner.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua would like to thank the President for organizing this meeting. Nicaragua endorses the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which expressed our position and that of the majority of the States Members of this Organization. Our delegation reiterates its firm commitment to the process of revitalizing and democratizing the General Assembly, and we wish to continue to work constructively, so that the Assembly can be seen to be, in every aspect, the most representative and legitimate organ of the Organization.

As we have stated on various occasions, Nicaragua considers the democratization of the United Nations to be very important; in order to achieve that goal we must continue to work to restore the authority of the General Assembly and enable it to function as the chief deliberative, standard-setting and democratic organ of the Organization. We believe that the process of revitalizing the work of the Assembly must be universal, transparent and accountable, arrived at through open and inclusive consultations, which are a critical component of United Nations reform, including reform of the Security Council. The Council cannot continue to usurp the functions and powers of the General Assembly. The process of electing the Secretary-General is also very important.

Carrying out that initiative will require restoring and increasing the authority of the General Assembly, which in turn will require restoring its functions and jurisdiction and strengthening its relations and collaboration with other organs of the Organization. Such a reinvigoration of the General Assembly would make it able to answer the needs of all 193 Member States equally and fulfil the principle of the equality of all Members.

A similar reinvigoration is essential for the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Measures must be taken and procedures put in place to augment its human and financial resources. Every State should have the possibility of presiding over the Assembly. Financial considerations should not be an impediment. Increased funding for the Office is therefore important to strengthening the General Assembly.

The Nicaraguan delegation believes that the General Assembly should more rigorously fulfil its responsibilities in the nomination and appointment of the Secretary-General, and should engage Member States' participation in a more inclusive way. Likewise, all Member States should have increased input into the debate about and the election of candidates. It is also important to say that all resolutions adopted by consensus on the revitalization of the Assembly should be implemented fully and as quickly as possible, so as to actually achieve that goal.

We must rebuff all attempts to minimize the achievements and importance of the General Assembly, to diminish its role and functions or to impugn its relevance and credibility. For the good of all of the peoples we represent, the voice and the votes of all States Members of the Organization should be ever more loudly heard. Nicaragua will continue to support all efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the General Assembly, and we are always ready to engage in constructive debate on any issue that will lead to improving the work of our Organization.

Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar (Pakistan): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate, which deals with a subject of paramount importance for Member States. Pakistan pledges its full support and cooperation.

We appreciate the work done by the two co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, as well as that of their predecessors. We also align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the past two decades, much effort has been directed towards the shared goal of revitalizing this unique and universal body. It has been a worthwhile pursuit for several reasons. Together we have made considerable progress in rationalizing and streamlining the work of the Committees. Our collective effort has led to increased financial savings and efficiency gains. We have also raised the profile of the General Assembly.

However, for many of us, the revitalization debate seems to be losing vitality. Concerns persist over a range of issues, including the non-implementation of resolutions, the growing encroachment by the Security Council on the role and authority of the Assembly, the marginalization of Assembly's role in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and others. Perhaps, we first need to revitalize the revitalization debate.

As to the reform of the Security Council, it can be meaningful only if it is decided with the widest possible margin of agreement and in a spirit of compromise and flexibility. Any exercise in reform should make the

Council more democratic and accountable to the general membership and not create new centres of privilege.

In a new debate on revitalization, it would be useful to focus on two mutually reinforcing aspects, efficiency and efficacy. In some ways, considerable discussion has already taken place on improving the working methods of United Nations bodies, including the Assembly and its Committees. In fact, several measures have been adopted, including a more streamlined programme of work, the biennialization or triennialization of agenda resolutions and the early selection of the Chairs of the Committees and Bureaus.

However, those steps have essentially focused on efficiency and rationalization, and much progress has indeed been made on that count. Yet, to many of us, the effectiveness and authority of the Assembly seems to remain a largely unfulfilled task. We must therefore dig deeper and identify the real causes behind the conundrum whereby efficiency gains seemingly continue to defeat the larger political imperative of effectiveness. We look forward to a more focused debate on the correlation between the objectives of efficiency and effectiveness.

It may also be worthwhile to explore new ideas about how to bring more vigour, visibility and attention to the revitalization debate. We propose that the Ad Hoc Working Group examine the possibility of convening a high-level meeting in the future. We support the Non-Aligned Movement's suggestion in that regard and look forward to exchanging views within the Working Group.

Mr. Workie (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me to join others in commending the Permanent Representatives of the Gambia and Georgia for their very hard and valuable work in co-facilitating the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the previous session. Allow me also to align my delegation with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The General Assembly is not only one of the principal organs of the United Nations but also its most representative and chief deliberative, policy-making body. No other intergovernmental body in the world enjoys such a universal membership or covers such a broad spectrum of issues as the General Assembly. That breadth of membership and scope has a direct impact on international peace and security.

We strongly believe that the revitalization of the General Assembly will help strengthen the determination of Member States to pursue multilateralism, which will, in turn, have a major and far-reaching impact on rebuilding the authority and credibility of the United Nations system as a whole. In that regard, we wish to underline the critical importance of the Ad Hoc Working Group, and we urge it to build upon its progress in previous sessions. To that end, we are convinced that resolutions 65/315 and 66/294 in particular, along with other earlier resolutions, can and should serve as the basis for the work of Ad Hoc Working Group.

As for the relationship of the General Assembly to the other principal organs of the United Nations, my delegation is of the view that it remains important to improve transparency, the exchange of information and cooperation. The General Assembly should benefit from information about meetings between the President of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as meetings involving the Chairs of subsidiary bodies.

Periodic briefings by the President of the General Assembly on his recent activities, including official travel, continue to be an appreciated practice and are a valuable source of information. We also appreciate the continued practice of holding periodic informal briefings by the Secretary-General on his priorities, travels and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations, and we encourage him to continue with that practice.

On the issue of working methods, we would like to stress the need for the further rationalization and streamlining of the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, so as to better define the focus and avoid duplication in our deliberations. In that regard, leadership by the Chairs and the Bureaux of the Main Committees is of particular importance. Although each Main Committee is master of its own rules of procedure, we believe that streamlining and standardizing certain rules would lead to greater efficient in the work of the Committees.

While noting with appreciation the progress achieved so far, we feel that debates in the General Assembly have often shown duplication, resulting in the adoption of overlapping resolutions without an effective mechanism for assessing and evaluating their implementation, with the result that the assessment's relevance or effectiveness in helping to achieve the desired outcomes is undermined. In that regard, we are in favour of launching the regular review of resolutions and decisions adopted previously by the Assembly and of making the necessary adjustments on the basis of the results stemming from their implementation.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. Our view on the subject is that, without prejudice to Article 97 of the Charter, the Assembly should play a more meaningful role in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We share the views expressed by others that there must be substantive interaction between the candidates and the Assembly and that due regard must continue to be given to regional rotation.

Ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is also essential to improving the role and authority of the Assembly, including through enhancing the institutional memory of that Office. In that regard, resolution 66/294, which allocates the necessary budget to and strengthens the human resources component of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, is of critical importance.

In conclusion, Ethiopia is ready, as in the past, to extend its cooperation and looks forward to doing so by working with the Ad Hoc Working Group during the current session. We believe that the continuation of the discussion within the Ad Hoc Working Group contributes to moving forward not only the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly but also the enhancement of the overall reform efforts of the United Nations system, including the Security Council.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the agenda items before us. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 115 and 116.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations

A/67/PV.24

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

24th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 October 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić .... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda items 72 and 73

Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the seventeenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal (A/67/253)

Report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the nineteenth annual report of the International Tribunal (A/67/214)

The President: I now give the floor to Judge Vagn Joensen, President of the International Criminial Tribunal for Rwanda.

Mr. Joensen (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda): I would like to start by extending my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the Assembly. I wish you a successful term in office.

It is a great honour for me to address the members of the General Assembly for the first time and to present the seventeenth annual report (A/67/253) of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). I am pleased to report this will be one of the last speeches the President of the ICTR makes to the General Assembly with respect to the annual report, as we are rapidly approaching the conclusion of our mandate.

It is my pleasure to report that we have accomplished a great deal towards the completion of our work over the past year. We remain on schedule for delivery of the final remaining trial judgement by the end of this year and completion of all appeals by the end of 2014. Since last year's report to the Assembly (A/66/209), the Tribunal has undergone a significant shift in focus with respect to judicial and administrative activities alike. Judicial and legal activity has become more focused on requests for referral of cases to Rwanda, and administrative energies are increasingly spent on downsizing and providing support to the Arusha branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, which began its work in July. However, none of this has taken away from the nucleus of our work — completing all trial and appellate proceedings in a fair and expeditious manner.

During the reporting period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, the Tribunal rendered five trial judgements and seven appeals judgements, involving a total of 17 accused. As of today, the total number of people whose judgements have been completed at the trial level is 74 and the total number of persons

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whose cases have been completed at the appellate level is 44. In September 2011, the Tribunal rendered the second-to-last multi-accused judgement in the case of *Bizimungu et al.* with respect to four accused, and in December 2011 the final multi-accused trial judgement was delivered in the *Karemera et al.* case. This marked the most expeditious judgement delivery in a multi-accused case, demonstrating that the efforts to improve efficiency begun by President Byron several years ago have had a positive impact on the Tribunal's completion strategy, without compromising fair trial rights.

Additionally, in December 2011, the Appeals Chamber upheld the first decision to refer an ICTR case to Rwanda for trial. After the arrangements for monitoring the trial in Rwanda were established, Jean Uwinkindi was transferred to Rwanda in April 2012, where he is currently awaiting the commencement of his trial. The Tribunal will monitor the Uwinkindi trial closely, and continues to offer ongoing capacity-building support to further strengthen the Rwandan judiciary, in particular with respect to witness protection.

A second decision to refer an accused in the custody of the Tribunal was rendered by the Trial Chamber in June with respect to Bernard Munyagishari. The decision to refer the case to Rwanda is currently under appeal. We anticipate that the appeals decision on the Munyagishari referral will be rendered before the end of the year, as will the final remaining trial judgement in the *Ngirabatware* case. I note that any appeal in the *Ngirabatware* case would be handled by the Mechanism, as the deadline for appeals to be filed with the ICTR was 30 June, and that we remain on track to complete the current pending appeals by the end of 2014.

It must also be noted that the responsibility for two pending contempt of court/false testimony cases, where indictments have already been confirmed, remains with the ICTR. This means that it could be necessary to call ad litem judges from the roster in order to constitute benches for these contempt trials in the event that arrests are made. It is anticipated that any contempt trial could be concluded approximately one year from the time of arrest and transfer to the ICTR.

We would not be at such an advanced stage without the efforts of our entire staff, and their contributions have not gone unnoticed. The 11 permanent judges and three ad litem judges who work in the Trial and Appeals Chambers continue to work tirelessly to complete the Tribunal's work. On 29 June of this year, the Security Council adopted resolution 2054 (2012), permitting three of my fellow judges and me to serve beyond the expiry of our terms of office to fulfil the completion strategy. At this time, I would like to thank the Security Council for making these extensions possible, and our judges for their dedication and willingness to remain with the Tribunal in order to complete their work.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate ICTR Prosecutor Hassan Jallow, who was appointed by the Secretary-General earlier this year as Prosecutor of the Mechanism. Mr. Jallow will also continue serving as Prosecutor of the ICTR and has been making tremendous efforts to facilitate the transfer of cases to the Mechanism.

Fugitive tracking is at the core of the Prosecutor's remaining work in his role in the Mechanism. There are still nine fugitives at large who were indicted by the ICTR. None, however, will be tried by the ICTR. Three of the fugitives are considered by the Prosecutor to be among those most responsible for the planning and execution of the genocide, and he has therefore determined that their cases should remain before an international tribunal. Félicien Kabuga, Protais Mpiranya and Augustin Bizimana will stand trial before the Mechanism when they are arrested. The preservation of evidence proceedings under rule 71 bis was completed for all three during the reporting period to help ensure that evidence is still available when those high-ranking fugitives are arrested. The cases of the remaining six fugitives have been referred to Rwanda, and the Office of the Prosecutor has worked closely with the Rwandan Prosecutor-General to hand over case files and share information.

I would now like to take a moment to express my congratulations to both the Registrar and the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), who were appointed earlier this year to double-hat in their respective positions in the Mechanism. I would also like to commend the former ICTR Registrar, Mr. Adama Dieng, who after over a decade of service with the ICTR, was recently appointed Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide. I congratulate Mr. Dieng on this well-deserved career achievement, and applaud the Secretary-General on his choice for Special Adviser. Mr. Dieng is eminently qualified for the position of Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and the ICTR looks forward to working closely with him where opportunities arise to combine our efforts in the battle against impunity.

I would also like to thank Mr. Dieng for all that he and his staff have done to assist with making practical arrangements for the coordinated provision of administrative and other services to the Mechanism, in line with Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), and for his continued work with Member States on a number of matters, including various cooperation issues, enforcement of sentences, and the relocation of persons acquitted by the tribunals and those who have finished serving their sentences.

In terms of preparing the Tribunal's records for transfer to the Mechanism, we would like to thank the ICTR Archives and Records Management Working Group for all of its hard work throughout this process. We also thank those offices with which they have worked closely to develop the recently published Secretary-General's bulletin entitled "International Criminal Tribunals: information sensitivity, classification, handling, and access" (ST/SGB/2012/3) to the records of the Tribunals and Mechanism, including the Mechanism, the ICTY, the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), and the Archives and Records Management Section of the Department of Management. During the reporting period, the ICTR and ICTY also worked closely with OLA to develop the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the Residual Mechanism, leading to its publication this past June.

Next, I turn to the future. We are very grateful to the Secretary-General for his prompt appointment of Mr. Pascal Besnier, former Acting Deputy Registrar of the Tribunal, as the Acting Registrar, and would like to congratulate Mr. Besnier on his appointment. The quick action of the Secretary-General in the matter has ensured that the ICTR Registry will have a seamless transition of leadership throughout the interim period until the recruitment process for a new Registrar has been completed. A great deal of work awaits the incoming Registrar in terms of downsizing and providing support to the Mechanism in order to facilitate transfer of functions from the ICTR to the Mechanism. The Tribunal is thankful to have Mr. Besnier undertaking that process until a new Registrar is appointed.

I now turn to an issue that has been at the forefront of problems facing the Tribunal in recent years, and it is one that will continue to plague us in the future if action is not taken. Following the trial judgement last year in the *Bizimungu et al.* case, there are now five acquitted persons for whom the Tribunal is obliged to provide protection in Arusha. Acquitted persons at present reside in a safe house, without travel documents, separated from their families, with limited freedom of movement, and not permitted access to employment.

The rule of law requires that those who have been lawfully acquitted be able to recommence their lives in full enjoyment of their rights, yet there are individuals who have now been residing at the safe house far beyond a reasonable period of time. One such acquitted person has now been there for over six years. Without the support of Member States to accept the individuals, it is impossible to predict how much longer they may remain stranded in Arusha. I therefore reiterate the pleas of my two predecessors for the renewed cooperation of Member States to implement a strategy that would make relocations possible.

I will now conclude with some thoughts on the legacy of the Tribunal. This year, the downsizing process that began in 2008 to 2009 continued with approximately 100 staff being separated since January. As our last staff members leave, we lose our collective experience and memory. If it is not captured now, it will be very difficult to retrieve in the future. Therefore, the ICTR has engaged in several outreach activities as a means of collecting and sharing the most important aspects of the work of the Tribunal before it closes its doors. The ICTR Legacy Committee, combined with Tribunal-wide efforts, continues to work vigorously to preserve records. The legacy team of the Office of the Prosecutor continues apace and is at an advanced stage of completion of its legacy projects.

Over the past year, ICTR legacy projects have included involvement in the youth sensitization and genocide protection project in the Great Lakes region, as well as capacity-building activities for approximately 100 legal professionals in Rwanda. Additionally, throughout the current downsizing phase, the Tribunal has attracted a higher number of visitors, and more than 500,000 individuals visited the Tribunal's website during this reporting period alone. If resources are not allocated to preserve our legacy, we will be in danger of losing the lessons learned by an institution that has helped to shape international law. We hope that the General Assembly will continue to support our efforts to preserve our legacy through those projects.

On behalf of the entire Tribunal, I wish to express our gratitude for the support that the Governments of Member States have shown over the past 18 years.

Member States have continuously assisted the Tribunal by arresting accused persons, providing facilities for incarcerating convicted persons, demonstrating an outstanding willingness to facilitate the transfer of witnesses from their territories, and by making voluntary donations of financial and other assistance. Over 70 nationalities are represented at the Tribunal, and we cannot overemphasize how great a role Member States and each Tribunal staff member have played throughout these 18 years. As our work nears conclusion, I must say that it is an honour to be part of the Tribunal, and it has been a great pleasure and honour addressing the General Assembly today.

The President: I call on Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Judge Meron (International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia): It is an honour for me to be here today to present the Tribunal's nineteenth annual report to the General Assembly (A/67/214). Mr. President, I would also like to take this moment to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly.

As members of the Assembly may be aware, this is my second term as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), my first having been in the years 2003 to 2005. With my new term come the same obligations to the international community that were present with the first. Chief among them is the need to expeditiously complete the mandate of the Tribunal while according full respect to the due process rights of the accused and due regard to the protection of victims and witnesses.

As will be known from my report, the Tribunal is very close to the completion of its mandate, and all efforts are being expended to ensure the orderly completion of the Tribunal's work within the timelines set by the Security Council. But, as the international community has learned over the years, the international criminal trial process is inevitably subject to the vagaries common to all criminal law proceedings, such as late disclosures of exculpatory material. Our trials are further complicated, however, by the inherent complexity of international criminal proceedings, including the geographical scope of the underlying allegations, the number of incidents charged, and the fact that the trials are conducted far from the territory on which the crimes were committed.

Unforeseen circumstances also arise that have an impact on the expeditious conduct of both trials and appeals, such as the illness of an accused, the death of counsel, delays caused by the right of the accused to have materials translated into his or her own language, and delays in State cooperation or in the securing of witnesses. In addition, the progress of cases may be adversely impacted by the loss of experienced and talented Tribunal staff in Chambers, as well as by the commitments of judges and staff alike to other, simultaneous proceedings, including trials for core crimes and trials for contempt.

These factors create myriad challenges for the Tribunal and underscore the fact that predicting the length of proceedings at the Tribunal is, at best, an art and not a science. Despite these challenges, however, the Tribunal remains steadfast in its commitment to satisfying the desire of the international community that the Tribunal bring its proceedings to a close, and my colleagues and I continue to seek out new and innovative means to increase our efficiency without sacrificing our commitment to quality and due process.

We are already making tremendous progress. Within the next 12 months, it is anticipated that all trials, other than those of the recently arrested accused, will be completed, and the bulk of the Tribunal's work will be on appeals. Most of those appeals will be completed by the Appeals Chamber by December 2014; others will fall to the competence of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals — now known simply as the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals — which is the institution established by the Security Council to assume responsibility for core functions of the ICTY and the International Criminial Tribunal for Rwanda, as those first two pioneering institutions bring their work to a close. The Arusha branch of the Mechanism commenced operations on 1 July 2012, in full conformity with Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), and I expect that the launch of The Hague branch of the Mechanism on 1 July 2013 will go just as smoothly.

As I noted at the outset, this is the Tribunal's nineteenth annual report to the General Assembly, and next May we will celebrate 20 years since the Security Council took the vitally important step of establishing the ICTY. In the light of this milestone, I think it only fitting to focus for a moment on the remarkable achievements of the Tribunal during the intervening years — achievements that have not only contributed to bringing peace and reconciliation to the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but have resonated far beyond that region, leading to the creation of other international courts and tribunals and forging a new international culture of accountability.

I need not remind the Assembly that following the closure of the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals after the Second World War, the idea of international criminal justice — of holding those who are alleged to have committed the worst of crimes accountable — was all but forgotten. With the creation of the Tribunal in 1993, however, came a new awakening. Admittedly, when it was first established, the Tribunal was little more than an ideal — an expression of the outrage of the international community at the atrocities that were being broadcast on television screens as the conflict raged throughout the former Yugoslavia. At the time, there was little real faith or real comprehension about what the Tribunal could actually achieve as a measure to bring justice or even restore peace. It was just hoped that the Tribunal could do something.

From its very first trial, the Tribunal demonstrated to the international community that it could do much more. In judgement after judgement, the Tribunal not only patiently and painstakingly considered the evidence and testimony concerning crimes alleged to have occurred during some of the worst conflicts in a generation; it also breathed life into laws that had hitherto rarely been applied, and began the vital process of elucidating and defining the contours of international humanitarian law, all the while paying full respect to the rights of the accused and the principle of legality.

Indeed, from the very beginning, the Tribunal made great strides in articulating a coherent and robust body of customary international humanitarian law and great advancements, particularly in relation to crimes of a sexual nature, which had been predominately untouched by its Second World War predecessors. Through its judgements, the Tribunal clarified that the crime of rape could also constitute the crime of torture and the crime of genocide. The Tribunal determined that lack of evidence of resistance to a sexual crime could not be the basis to infer consent during times of armed conflict, and that the uncorroborated evidence of a single witness, if found reliable and credible, could be sufficient to support a conviction for rape. In doing so, the Tribunal led the way for a new focus by the international community on crimes of sexual violence during armed conflict, and motivated the United Nations to take action in support of women and other victims the world over.

In addition, the Tribunal led the way in finding that State immunity is not a bar to prosecution in an international tribunal — a finding confirmed by the International Court of Justice in the *Arrest Warrant* case. The rulings of the Tribunal helped to make it possible for other courts, such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone, to bring charges against former Heads of State and other key leaders, and for adoption of a provision in the Statute of the International Criminal Court removing the protection of immunity for Heads of State.

The Tribunal has also played a fundamental role in highlighting the dissolution of the traditional distinction between laws applicable to international armed conflict and those applicable to internal armed conflict. The Tribunal found that the same rules could and should be applied to both international and non-international conflicts, and that civilians everywhere were entitled to the same protections no matter the legal characterization of an armed conflict. The Tribunal also clarified what it meant to be a protected person under the Geneva Conventions, finding that allegiance and effective protection were the guiding criteria and not nationality — a factor that offered no protection where inter-ethnic violence was concerned.

However, the Tribunal's achievements are not limited to substantive law. Indeed, the ICTY has also made extremely significant contributions to international criminal procedural and evidentiary law. The Tribunal has successfully moulded the best aspects of adversarial and civil law procedures, creating an international body of procedural law that provides not just for expeditious trials, but for trials that are also consistent with the highest international standards of due process and accord due respect to the human dignity of the accused. It is telling that the Tribunal's Rules of Procedure and Evidence have formed the basis of the rules of procedure and evidence adopted by international criminal courts that followed.

At the same time, the Tribunal has also had a profound impact on the development of the legal systems of the countries of the former Yugoslavia, and has made great contributions to the capacity of those countries to take ownership of cases involving alleged atrocities on their territories and to bring to justice those who remain to be prosecuted. Among other things, the Tribunal assisted in the establishment of the Special

War Crimes Chamber in Bosnia; shared its experience and expertise with judges from Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia; and demonstrated its faith in the professional competence of its counterparts in the region through the transfer of its lower- and intermediate-level accused for prosecution.

In sum, the Tribunal has truly been a success story. But if I have referred today to the Tribunal's many accomplishments, it is equally clear to me that these are truly the achievements of all States Members of the United Nations as well. Without the substantial support that Member States have long afforded the Tribunal, none of what we have accomplished would have been possible. Because of their cooperation and commitment, the Tribunal and the success of its work over the past two decades have had a profound impact on the landscape of international criminal justice. So while the international community understandably wishes to bring the Tribunal's work to a close as expeditiously as possible, I hope that its members will also reflect, with justifiable pride, upon the extraordinary benefits that have accrued from the international community's initial investment in the Tribunal and from their support in the years that followed.

Over the course of the nearly two decades of its existence, the Tribunal has established the feasibility and enforceability of international criminal justice, blazed the trail for a host of new international courts and tribunals and pioneered the framework of what is effectively a new world order, in which all alleged perpetrators of gross violations of humanitarian norms and human rights in times of armed conflict may be held responsible for their actions, and in which the question is not if, but when and where they will be called to account. I congratulate my fellow colleagues on that accomplishment, and extend my deepest thanks for their abiding faith in our work.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

This year once again, the European Union and its member States reaffirm their unwavering support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Both Tribunals are making invaluable contributions to our shared goal of ending impunity for serious international crimes. The European Union and its member States thank both President Meron and President Joensen for their briefings and commend them for their efforts in completing the work of the Tribunals. We also pay special tribute to the work of all the staff of the Tribunals.

The Tribunals have played key roles in strengthening the rule of law and promoting long-term stability and reconciliation — and not only in the Balkans and Rwanda. Their jurisprudence has had far wider effects. Since their establishment, both Tribunals have embodied the need to fight impunity and the refusal of the international community to let the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern escape justice. They were forerunners in creating jurisprudence that is a source of inspiration to all national and international jurisdictions that are addressing and will have to address such crimes. Their record bears that out.

International criminal justice does exist now with the permanent International Criminal Court; it prevails, and sooner or later, the perpetrators will be held accountable for their crimes. The arrests and swift transfers to The Hague of the long-sought fugitives Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić demonstrated that. Their trials, as in all of the other cases ongoing before the Courts, will fulfil the duty to provide justice for the victims and their families. We recall that States' cooperation remains the cornerstone of the Tribunals' ability to complete their mandate, in particular cooperation in bringing those indicted before justice.

With respect to the ICTR, we recall that despite the continuing appeals of the international community, nine accused individuals remain at large. The failure to arrest those indictees remains a matter of grave concern. Among those still at large are three key indictees allegedly responsible for the most serious atrocities, including Félicien Kabuga. We call on all States concerned to intensify their efforts to ensure that all indictees are arrested and surrendered to the ICTR.

We note that the cooperation of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the ICTY was generally adequate during the reporting period, which saw Serbia in particular meet one of its key obligations with the apprehension of Goran Hadžić, the final indictee to be tried before the Tribunal. The countries remain committed to meeting their obligations to the Tribunal and justice. Completing the process of rendering justice for crimes committed during the conflicts in the former

Yugoslavia is essential for lasting reconciliation. Full cooperation with the ICTY remains an essential condition for the Stabilization and Association Process in the western Balkans, and is an essential condition for membership of the European Union.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The European Union and its Member States also call upon the Governments concerned to pursue with greater vigour the proper conduct of domestic war crime trials. Political leaders should avoid statements and measures that could call into question the importance of reconciliation and the need to serve justice through the prosecution of war crimes. We continue to urge all States to cooperate with both Tribunals in full adherence to their obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to the ICTR, the European Union and its member States note with appreciation that the Prosecutor has intensified efforts to track the remaining fugitives, and in this regard has sought support from regional organizations in eastern and southern Africa. We also note that active consultations with INTERPOL and with Member States elsewhere have also assisted in narrowing the search for the three top-level fugitives. Cooperation with States is needed to ensure that the fugitives are apprehended.

In recognition of strengthened domestic capacity, the Security Council in its resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004) called on the ICTY and ICTR to transfer all lower- and mid-level accused to competent national jurisdictions for trial by domestic courts. We welcome the ongoing efforts of Rwanda, in cooperation with international donors, to strengthen the Rwandan legal system and its ability to adjudicate cases from the ICTR.

The European Union and its member States confirm their commitment to supporting activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Rwandan judiciary. We note with appreciation that the Prosecutor of the ICTR has completed the preparation of the case files for the fugitives earmarked for transfer to national jurisdictions, and that the Office of the Prosecutor has handed over the completed dossiers in order to facilitate their early indictment, trial and judgement before the Rwandan High Court.

We welcome the work of the Tribunals on strengthening the capacity of national authorities to handle the remaining war crime cases effectively. We fully support — including with financial means — the training and information exchanges, as well as the access to publicly available investigating material and evidence from the Tribunals. This is important for the Tribunal's legacy and for the domestic capacity to adjudicate war crimes. In its Stabilization and Association Process for the Western Balkans, the European Union is increasingly underlining the importance of local ownership for handling war crime cases in line with the need to fight impunity.

The European Union and its member States further welcome the launch on 2 July of the Arusha branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1966 (2010) of 22 December 2010, following the election on 20 December 2011 of a roster of 25 judges who will serve the Mechanism and form its core.

In its first decision of 5 October, the Appeals Chamber of the Mechanism upheld a decision by the ICTR to transfer a case to the Republic of Rwanda for trial proceedings. In reaching its decision, the Appeals Chamber stated that the Mechanism's statute and Rules of Procedure and Evidence reflect normative continuity with those of the ICTY and ICTR. According to the Appeals Chamber, these parallels are not simply a matter of convenience or efficiency, but serve to uphold principles of due process and fundamental fairness, which are the cornerstone of international justice. We look forward to the establishment of the ICTY branch of the Mechanism, which is foreseen on 1 July 2013.

Finally, we welcome the steps taken by the Tribunals in terms of capacity-building, dissemination of information and legacy. We note in particular the Conference hosted by the ICTY in November 2011 on the global legacy of the Tribunal, and that efforts have been deployed towards creating information centres in the region of the former Yugoslavia. We also note the workshops, legal trainings and exhibitions organized by the ICTR. It is important that knowledge gained and lessons learned in the fight against impunity not be forgotten.

Mr. Kumar (India): I am honoured to speak before the General Assembly. At the outset, I thank Judge Meron, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and Judge Joensen, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), for their excellent presentations, and congratulate them on expediting the work of the Tribunals.

India is committed to global peace and to upholding human rights, and is steadfast in its support for counter-terrorism. India welcomes the progress made by the two Tribunals in implementing their completion strategy. We are happy that all organs of the Tribunals are ensuring their best efforts to complete their work expeditiously and to prepare for a smooth transition to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. We are also pleased to note that while focusing on their goal of completing their judicial proceedings as soon as possible through intense trial, referral and appeals activity and judgement drafting, the two Tribunals were equally mindful that due process not be sacrificed.

It is very reassuring that the preparations for the commencement of the Mechanism are on track, including the development of a budget proposal for the biennium 2012-2013 and the Rules of Procedure and Evidence for the Mechanism. We welcome the opening of the Arusha branch of the Mechanism, which started its operations on 1 July. We are confident that the Mechanism will make good progress under the leadership of Judge Meron, who is also double-hatting as the Mechanism's President.

We appreciate the close cooperation between the two Tribunals and the Security Council. We are happy to note that the recommendations made by the Security Council pursuant to the request of the Tribunals, including on hiring and retaining qualified interns and other issues, has brought tangible results and helped the Tribunals progress faster towards the implementation of the completion strategy and the launch of the Mechanism.

We appreciate the untiring efforts made by Judge Meron, who has adopted a variety of reforms to improve the functioning of various sections of the Tribunal. As a result, the trials of Mladić, Hadžić and Karadžić could be advanced many months ahead of their expected schedule. Similarly, appeals in some cases were advanced significantly ahead of their schedule. This is a very positive sign, and we congratulate Judge Meron on this welcome development.

We are also happy to note that the ICTR has completed work at the trial level. The Appeals Chamber upheld the decision to refer the first ICTR case to Rwanda for trial, and a further six cases of fugitive accused have been referred to Rwanda. It is important that all trials be on track and completed by end 2012.

It is critical to help the Tribunals finish their work on time. We listened very carefully to the concerns raised by the Presidents of the two Tribunals in relation to their ability to keep pace with their work while adhering to the expected timelines until the close of business. The Judges have pointed out that trials and appeals continue to be affected by staffing shortages and the loss of highly efficient staff members. We share the concerns expressed by the Judges, especially on the need for retaining adequate and experienced staff.

The Judges also raised the issue of the relocation of acquitted persons and those who have already served their sentences. Some of them have been living in safe homes in Arusha for the past five years. This is an important humanitarian issue and requires careful consideration. We urge the Secretariat and the Security Council to give careful consideration to the suggestions made by the Judges on how to address this challenge. This is a practical issue that requires the consideration of pragmatic and innovative solutions, and we stand ready to work with other members of the Council to solve this problem.

We also commend the efforts of the Prosecutors of the two Tribunals to undertake outreach initiatives, including training aimed at strengthening the capacity of national systems to handle referred cases effectively. We would like to see the legacy of the Tribunals preserved. We agree with Judge Joensen's conclusion that the Tribunals' impact will not only be challenging impunity, but also helping to improve the means to dispense justice for an entire region.

The cooperation of all concerned States is vital to ensuring the completion of the mandates of the Tribunals and the successful implementation of the completion strategy. We appreciate Serbia's sustained efforts in that regard and request other States to extend effective cooperation so that the remaining fugitives can be located soon and surrendered to end impunity.

We also note with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Any functional, operational or institutional issue in the implementation of the completion strategy or the Mechanism may be addressed by the Council, in consultation with its Informal Working Group on International Tribunals and with the assistance of the Office of Legal Affairs.

We believe that the two Tribunals have admirably implemented their mandates. We consider the support of the Security Council to be crucial at this critical juncture in the life of the Tribunals. At the same time, we urge both Tribunals to continue to take all necessary measures to keep the trial and appeal schedules on track. This will pave the way for successful trials for the remaining accused and the smooth implementation of an efficient Residual Mechanism.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): Let me at the outset thank Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and Judge Vagn Joensen, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), for their comprehensive reports on the completion strategy of their respective tribunals.

Rwanda commends the achievements of the ICTR during the period under review, despite challenges in staff retention and recruitment. Since its inception, the ICTR has delivered 74 trial judgements, including 44 by the Appeals Chamber. Moreover, eight cases have been transferred to Rwanda, including two cases of indictees in custody. Rwanda welcomes these developments and expresses its gratitude to the Tribunal for these referrals as a vote of confidence in Rwanda and its justice system.

As indicated in the ICTR report (A/67/253), Rwanda continued and will continue to cooperate with the Tribunal. The Rwanda Witness Protection Service continued to facilitate access to witnesses from both sides, while ensuring their security and assisting their movement from and to Arusha. My Government has also, as usual, extended support to investigations and made available all relevant documents.

Rwanda welcomes the decision taken by the Government of Zimbabwe to launch a manhunt for the fugitive Protais Mpiranya, one of the masterminds of the Rwanda genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi in 1994. We urge other countries in the region to make similar efforts and to cooperate with the ICTR in tracking, arresting and transferring the remaining fugitives, particularly the most wanted, Félicien Kabuga.

Rwanda also welcomes the decision taken in January by the Federal Court of Canada to extradite Léon Mugesera to Rwanda, a genocide suspect well known for his November 1992 hate speech against the Tutsi. My delegation takes this opportunity to encourage all Member States, particularly in Europe and North America, to arrest and extradite all genocide fugitives and suspects living on their soil.

My delegation takes note of the commitment of the ICTR to continue monitoring the cases of Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka and Laurent Bucyibaruta, who were transferred to France in November 2007. However, five years after the referral, Rwanda notes with concern the delays in the procedure in France. Therefore, we call upon the ICTR to produce a more substantive report on the status of the prosecutions of the two cases. On this issue, we may recall that, under rule 11 bis of its Rules of Procedure, the ICTR has the right and the duty to revoke these referrals from the French courts if those delays persist.

The position of Rwanda regarding the ICTR archives is well known. Our country believes that the ICTR archives should remain the property of the United Nations. Genocide is a crime against humanity, and it is right and appropriate that the Organization representing the community of nations keep these records. Nonetheless, Rwanda has, on many occasions, formally requested to host these United Nations archives in Kigali upon completion of the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Indeed, these records constitute an integral part of our history and are vital to the preservation of the memory and education of younger generations. The location of the archives in Rwanda would ensure easy access to genocide survivors, researchers and the broader international community with a view to achieving the mission of the United Nations to promote peace and to ensure the prevention of genocide.

Eighteen years after a devastating genocide, Rwanda, with the support of the international community, has come a long way in delivering justice to victims and promoting reconciliation in Rwanda. The community-based jurisdictions, or gacaca, were officially closed on 18 June after trying more than 400,000 cases and fostering truth and reconciliation. For its part, the ICTR is now in its final phase and has brought a number of genocide fugitives to book.

To conclude, our Government pays tribute to its people and commends the ICTR and the Governments of sister countries that have contributed to the healing of our people and to the fight against impunity for serious crimes. Rwanda, as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council this coming Wednesday, will continue, if elected, to support the work of the

ICTR and the Residual Mechanism to achieve the same goal.

Mr. Norman (Canada): I have the honour of speaking today on behalf of New Zealand and Australia, as well as Canada (CANZ).

The CANZ countries wish to take this opportunity to express our strong support for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as well as for the newly operational International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and to encourage States to maintain their support for those institutions.

The CANZ countries commend the significant achievements of the Tribunals to date, as well as their efforts to complete their remaining work by the end of 2014, as set out in their respective completion strategies.

The record of the ICTY speaks for itself. Proceedings have already been concluded for 126 accused, with the remaining 35 currently at some stage of proceedings before the Court. The CANZ countries especially welcome the commencement of proceedings against the final two ICTY fugitives, Goran Hadžić and Ratko Mladić, who will now finally face justice for their actions. We support the ICTY's completion strategy, and particularly its focus on the prosecution of the most senior leaders, with cases involving middle- and lower-ranking accused being referred to national courts in the former Yugoslavia.

As for the ICTR and its significant achievements, it has indicted 92 individuals, although nine indictees remain at large. We call upon States to make special efforts to ensure that those fugitives are brought to justice, noting that the cases of six of the fugitives have been transferred to Rwanda, with the Mechanism retaining jurisdiction over the cases of Augustin Bizimana, Félicien Kabuga and Protais Mpiranya.

The CANZ countries recognize the excellent work of both Tribunals in involving domestic courts through training programmes, study visits and the referral of certain cases. That has had the direct effect of increasing the capacity of local actors to handle serious international crimes and other major cases. Other beneficial effects include the strengthening of the rule of law and the fostering of reconciliation in those regions. We also acknowledge the outstanding outreach undertaken by both Tribunals to make judgements accessible and understandable to victims and affected communities.

(*spoke in French*)

The CANZ countries note with satisfaction that the branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals covering functions inherited from the ICTR opened for work in July. We are confident that the handover of functions derived from the ICTY on 1 July 2013 — in addition to its work undertaken to prosecute ICTR fugitives, conduct appeal and retrial functions and trials for contempt and false testimony — will proceed just as smoothly. The CANZ countries wish to underscore the importance they attach to the Mechanism's work relating to the enforcement of sentences, witness protection, and the maintenance of the Tribunals' archives, which are critical legacy functions. The CANZ countries urge the Mechanism to prioritize efficiency in operations and calls on the international community to provide the Mechanism with the support it requires to fulfil its mandate effectively.

The ICTY and ICTR have proved their value by significantly contributing to the re-establishment of the rule of law, by developing the jurisprudence in the area of major international crimes, and by delivering effective justice to victims of such crimes. The work of the Tribunals has greatly advanced the cause of international criminal justice and will lay a solid foundation for future courts and tribunals. Australia, New Zealand and Canada will continue to offer our full support and cooperation to the Tribunals and to the Mechanism in their pursuit of international justice and the rule of law.

Ms. Prince (United States of America): First, let me thank President Meron of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and President Joensen of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for briefing us today and for their continued service. We thank Judge Meron for his service as President of both the ICTY and the Residual Mechanism. We are proud of him for his service as a jurist and consider him to be a giant in the field of international criminal justice. We welcome the strong and valuable leadership of both Presidents.

Since the last presentation to the Security Council, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals successfully began its functioning in July at its Arusha branch, and has already rendered its first decision. The transfer to the courts of Rwanda of the case of ICTR fugitive Phénéas Munyarugarama, a former military commander in the Rwandan army charged with genocide, complicity in genocide, and direct and public incitement to commit genocide and multiple counts of crimes against humanity.

We welcome Rwanda's willingness to fairly adjudicate transferred cases and commend the ICTR for arranging for the monitoring of trials in Rwanda. A strengthened national legal and justice sector will promote the long-term rule of law and stability in the region. We call on all States, particularly those in the Great Lakes region, to help apprehend the remaining fugitives and bring them to justice, whether through the ICTR, the Residual Mechanism or the courts of Rwanda. Those who harbour fugitives put themselves in peril and are only delaying the inevitable. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to continue to search for them and cooperate in those efforts.

The United States again commends the Tribunal Presidents for their efforts to enact cost-saving managerial and administrative measures in the ICTR, the ICTY and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and their efforts in transferring remaining functions of the Tribunals to the Residual Mechanism. Their efforts are especially important, given the unpredictability of the trial process, which can affect the length and expense of trials and appeals. We again underline the need of the Security Council to remain flexible in that regard.

Turning to the ICTY, we note that the trial of Goran Hadžić began last week. Hadžić was the last ICTY indictee apprehended, and his is the final trial to begin. Now all of the ICTY indictees are or have been on trial. We look forward to the ICTY Prosecutor's report at the end of the year so that we can learn more about Serbia's efforts to bring to justice those who hid Mladić, Hadžić and other ICTY fugitives, and who frustrated attempts to bring them to justice for so many years. The Governments of the region must work more assiduously towards reconciliation, avoiding actions and statements that are meant to inflame tensions rather than assuage them. Their records of cooperation with the ICTY and one another, as well as their progress on domestic justice and accountability initiatives, will be critical in that regard.

We also note that it has been almost 20 years since the Security Council established the ICTY and, later, the ICTR. Since then, those Tribunals have articulated a robust body of international humanitarian law, and they represent a strong legacy in the international fight against impunity for those who commit atrocities. The defendants convicted in Tribunal proceedings to date have been tried and found guilty of some of the most heinous crimes known to humankind. Thanks to the hard work of the Tribunals, and to the international community for funding them, the world now knows about those crimes, and their perpetrators are being held accountable for their actions.

In addition, there are now archives and public records that will be accessible for generations to come, bringing to light stories that would otherwise be lost or hidden in the shadows. This information is critical to combating the concerted efforts of those who seek to promote an alternative historical narrative at variance with judicially established fact. In addition to combating impunity, the Tribunals' contributions in the areas of local capacity-building and education will help to foster long-term peace and reconciliation. The international community must continue to fund these archives and efforts to promote reconciliation.

The United States remains committed to working with the international community to help protect populations from atrocities. We continue to take action to address ongoing atrocity situations and urge others to do so as well. We must also improve our national tools and collective efforts on prevention, response and accountability, with a focus on concrete results.

Mrs. Mørch Smith (Norway): Let me begin by extending our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Presidents of the International Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Judges Joensen and Meron, respectively. Their briefings today, together with the Tribunals' annual reports before us (A/67/253 and A/67/214), reflect the tireless efforts of the two Tribunals to successfully complete their mandates. It is our strong conviction that justice is a prerequisite for national reconciliation and lasting peace. As the work of the two Tribunals draws to a close, there is no doubt that they have laid a strong foundation for international peace and justice through their development and enforcement of international criminal law.

Last year was marked by the arrests of the remaining fugitives from the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. This was a historic precedent, demonstrating that international justice can indeed be delivered. At the same time, we expressed our grave concern about the relatively high number of outstanding arrest warrants from the Tribunal for Rwanda. Unfortunately, this number does not seem to have decreased during the reporting period. According to the ICTR's annual report, the cooperation and support of some Member States are essential to apprehending three fugitives who have yet to be arrested. However, we should also take into account that six other cases against accused fugitives were referred to Rwanda during the reporting period. We strongly urge all States, especially those of the Great Lakes region, to intensify their efforts to help ensure the arrest of the remaining nine fugitives.

Concluding the remaining proceedings against those indicted without delay, while at the same time fully respecting international standards of due process, is a challenge shared by both Tribunals. We welcome the measures taken by the Tribunals during the reporting period to increase efficiency. We appreciate the fact that they have made substantial progress towards finalizing their trial and appeals work, notwithstanding serious budgetary and staffing constraints. We are all grateful to the Tribunals' staff for their commitment to fulfilling the Tribunals' mandates.

If the Tribunals are to successfully conclude their mandates, they must still depend on the full cooperation of all States, and in particular the States of the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes region. In that regard, we commend the efforts made by Rwanda, with the support of the international donor community, to strengthen its national criminal judicial system. This has allowed the ICTR to refer eight cases to Rwanda for national trials, in connection with the ICTR's completion strategy. We now trust that Rwanda will put into practice the commitment it has made regarding its good faith, capacity and willingness to enforce the highest standards of international justice.

We are also pleased to note that cooperation between the ICTY and the countries of the former Yugoslavia was good during the reporting period. We are, however, concerned about information concerning political statements that could undermine the reconciliation effects of the ICTY's legal and factual findings and national efforts to prosecute people charged with war crimes.

The continuing fight against impunity for those who committed war crimes during the two conflicts is a shared responsibility, and will not end with the closure of the two Tribunals. It is therefore important to foster more effective cooperation between States, in particular between the countries of the regions concerned, and to strengthen the capacity of national judicial institutions to effectively handle the many war-crime cases that remain to be prosecuted.

The Arusha branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals has already begun operating, and The Hague branch will open soon. The ICTR has already handed over the files of the three high-level fugitives to the Prosecutor of the Mechanism. The establishment of the Mechanism will allow these two pioneering Tribunals to close without fear that impunity will prevail. As the mandates of the two ad hoc Tribunals draw to a close, the Residual Mechanism will have an important role to play in ensuring their long-term legacy. We are confident that the work of the Tribunals will lead the way in the continued fight against impunity.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, let me join previous speakers in thanking Judge Vagn Joensen, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), for presenting the annual reports of their Tribunals (A/67/253 and A/67/214). We note with gratitude the progress made in the completion strategies of the ICTR and ICTY during the period under review. We take this opportunity once again to congratulate President Theodor Meron and Prosecutor Hassan Jallow on their appointments to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. The Mechanism will benefit immensely from their expertise and experience.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the progress made by both of the Tribunals in expediting their work as they wind down. Our appreciation goes to the Presidents of the Tribunals, the judges and staff for their outstanding work in finalizing the judicial activity within the required time frame. The reports of the Tribunals reflect the concrete progress made thus far.

We note that as the Tribunals complete their mandates, the recruitment and retention of staff continue to pose major challenges to the work of the Tribunals. While noting with appreciation measures taken by the Department of Management to ensure the quick replacement of departing staff, we commend the significant achievements made by both Tribunals in the implementation of the completion strategy. My delegation therefore supports ICTR's appeal to the Secretariat and other relevant United Nations bodies to work closely with the Registrars of the Tribunals in looking for more practical ways of addressing the problem of staff attrition. We support the idea of providing adequate resources to make it possible for the Tribunals to complete their work in a timely manner.

My delegation is pleased that the Tribunals have continued to further develop interaction and cooperation with the authorities of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda to support domestic war crimes prosecution. We look forward to seeing further enhancement of such cooperation in the prosecution of war crimes in a bid to end impunity.

The cooperation of States Members of the United Nations would also be helpful in the transfer of individuals who have been either convicted or acquitted, or those who have completed their sentences. The President of the ICTR has been making efforts to find host States for some acquitted persons who are under the Tribunal's protection in Arusha. The issue of the relocation of acquitted and convicted persons has assumed urgency in view of the pending closure of the Tribunal. We call upon States to consider positively the Tribunals' request for more support and cooperation. We also appeal to Member States to provide full cooperation in ensuring that fugitives who are still at large are finally brought to justice.

The establishment of the International Residual Mechanism is significant to the continued protection of the rights of victims, witnesses and persons tried by the ICTR and ICTY and to maintaining the legacy of the Tribunals. Allow me to commend the practical arrangements made by the Secretary-General, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), in ensuring that the operations of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals begins. The preparation of the budget of the Residual Mechanism for the biennium 2012-2013 and the drafting of its Rules of Procedure and Evidence are testimony to those efforts, which culminated in the inauguration of the Mechanism's Arusha branch on 1 July. We wish to commend the Tribunal and the Office of Legal Affairs for their contribution to that endeavour.

With active steps being taken by both the Secretary-General and the President of the Mechanism, it is our firm conviction that the Mechanism's Hague branch will commence on 1 July 2013, as scheduled. We once again call upon the United Nations to provide the necessary support to make the smooth functioning of the Mechanism possible.

As host country to the Mechanism's Arusha branch, we convey our appreciation to the international community for the trust and confidence bestowed upon the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, and particularly for making the launching of the Mechanism possible. Tanzania remains ready and willing once again to assume its obligations. To that end, we will continue follow up closely on all pending issues pertaining to the construction of the Mechanism's Arusha branch building on the land allotted to it with the urgency it deserves. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania reiterates its continued support to the International Residual Mechanism.

In conclusion, the two decades of the Tribunals have made a commendable contribution to the development of international criminal law. As the work of the ad hoc Tribunals winds down, the International Residual Mechanism begins to take shape. The proceedings, decisions and judgments of the Tribunals have provided indispensable guidance to national and international courts. The lessons learned have been instrumental in disseminating the rule of law and the application of international criminal jurisprudence. Now it is up to the international community to ensure the success of that legacy through the Residual Mechanism.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): Let me begin by welcoming the President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Judge Theodor Meron, and the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Judge Vagn Joensen, and thanking them for their presentation of the annual reports of the two Tribunals (A/67/253 and A/67/214).

In connection with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), I would like to point out that all the Government agencies of the Republic of Serbia in charge of cooperation with the ICTY maintain good professional relations with ICTY representatives and defence teams alike. That cooperation has been continuous, smooth and successful. My country believes that full cooperation between Serbia and the ICTY has been achieved. With the arrest and transfer to The Hague of Goran Hadžić on 22 July 2011, Serbia completed its cooperation with the ICTY regarding the transfer of indictees. It transferred to the Tribunal 45 out of 46 persons indicted for war crimes; one person died before his transfer could be effected. Those persons included two former Presidents of the country, a former Prime Minister, a former Deputy Prime Minister, three former heads of the General Staff of the army of Yugoslavia, a former head of the State security service, and a number of military and police generals.

Serbia fully understands the interest of the Tribunal in the so-called fugitive aid network. The tracking down of the persons who took part in aiding the fugitives is, first and foremost, of great importance to my country, all the more so as the issue burdened Serbia's international position over a protracted period of time. Although we believe that the investigation and the processing of suspects is an internal question to be dealt with by national courts, the competent Serbian authorities will continue to provide, in good faith, information to the Office of the Prosecutor about the achieved results on a regular basis.

My country continues to cooperate with the Tribunal Chambers, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Secretariat, as well as with defence teams regarding documentation, State archives and witnesses. Almost all requests in that regard have been fulfilled. Only recent ones are still in the process of realization, and the new requests are being considered without delay. Serbia will continue to maintain the achieved level of that cooperation with the Tribunal.

Serbia is committed to establishing the full truth about crimes committed during armed conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, which includes the punishment of all those responsible for crimes, irrespective of their nationality or the nationality of the victims. Therefore, Serbia is fully determined to maintain the achieved level of cooperation with the Tribunal in the future as well, including the establishment of cooperation with the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

The results Serbia achieved in its cooperation with the Tribunal, including the fact that Serbian national courts have so far processed 389 persons indicted for criminal offences against international humanitarian law, are telling evidence of the contribution of my country to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the ICTY completion strategy, as well as to the process of the normalization of relations in the region.

Let me also say that my country maintains that our successful cooperation with the Tribunal gives us every right to continue to insist on the effective investigation into the allegations of the crimes of killing people for the purpose of organ trafficking, committed by the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army. Serbia expects that the ongoing investigation into the war crimes allegations contained in the 7 January, 2011, report of Mr. Dick Marty, Council of Europe Special Rapporteur, will be conducted professionally, impartially and efficiently in order for the truth to be established and perpetrators brought to justice. My country will continue to insist on that.

Mr. Panin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Presidents of the Tribunals for the presentation of their reports. We appreciate the updated information on the progress of the work of both bodies in the current final stage of their mandate, largely within the perspective of the opening in July of the Rwanda branch of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and the forthcoming opening of the Yugoslav branch. We note in that context the efforts of the Tribunal leadership to launch the Residual Mechanism on time and to effectively prepare its Rules of Procedure and to recruit the necessary staff. Furthermore, the staff of the Tribunals deserve high praise for their ongoing work in the Tribunals and the Residual Mechanism.

The Tribunals now have two interrelated tasks to effectively complete the remaining elements of their mandate and to complete their work in line with the timeline set out in Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), which calls for a speedier transfer of cases to the Residual Mechanism, which has already begun to operate, and to national jurisdictions.

The Tribunals are delivering justice well in the trial jurisdictions. In the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), there are no major delays in consideration of the *Mladić* and *Hadžić* cases. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in line with Security Council resolution 2054 (2012), has promised to complete its work on the *Ngirabatware* case before the end of 2012. That will be its last case for trial proceedings.

There has been concern over the appeals of cases, which, in accordance with the transition provision of the statute of the Residual Mechanism, will remain with the Tribunals. The Tribunals continue to have difficulty respecting the timetable for legal proceedings. We draw particular attention to the ICTY on the planned appeals in the cases of *Prlić et al.*, *Šešelj* and *Tolimir*. These probably should have been transferred to the Residual

Mechanism, but even if they remain in the Appeals Court, they should be completed before the end of 2014.

We regret the fact that the appeals at the ICTR in the *Nizeyimana* and *Nzabonimana* cases have not been transferred to the Residual Mechanism, although all conditions were in place to do so. The time gaps between the dates of sentencing, making defence appeals, and the opening of the Rwanda branch of the Residual Mechanism were minimal compared with the overall time scale of the legal proceedings, which was enormous. However, such a transfer would have allowed them not only to reduce the workload of the Appeals Court, but to bring up to speed the Residual Mechanism, giving it time for a warm-up before receiving appeals from the ICTY.

In conclusion, I note the significant support received by the Tribunals from States in both regions. Serbia has demonstrated a high level of cooperation with the ICTY. Serbia has launched investigations into how Goran Hadžić and Ratko Mladić were able to be on the run for so long on its territory. The quality of investigations should in no way be called into question, particularly taking into account the fact that there are already enough and even more serious problems associated with the ICTY and ICTR. We also approve of the practical decision adopted by Rwanda, which has actively cooperated with the ICTR by assuming cases under its jurisdiction.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these agenda items.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the seventeenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the nineteenth annual report of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 72 and 73?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at noon.